



Henry A. Sherwin.

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W. B. Moffet.

A

TRUE TREATISE
ON THE ART OF
FLY-FISHING,
TROLLING,
ETC.,

AS PRACTISED ON THE DOVE, AND ON THE PRINCIPAL
STREAMS OF THE MIDLAND COUNTIES;

APPLICABLE TO EVERY TROUT AND GRAYLING
RIVER IN THE EMPIRE.

BY WILLIAM SHIPLEY.

EDITED

BY EDWARD FITZGIBBON, ESQ.

LONDON:
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO.;

SOLD ALSO BY THE AUTHOR AT ASHBORNE,
AND BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1838.

DEDICATION.

TO

SIR WILLIAM BOOTHBY, BART.

OF ASHBORNE HALL, DERBYSHIRE,

AND TO

DAVID WATTS RUSSELL, ESQ.

OF ILAM HALL, STAFFORDSHIRE.

Gentlemen,

It has seldom fallen to the fortunate lot of an author, to be called upon to write a double dedication. Under ordinary circumstances the task would be a difficult one ; for it is not by any means easy to find two gentlemen so closely equal in rank, character, and influence as you are ; and to whom the same united meed of praise may be meted out unspa-

ringly with like truth and justice to both parties. Happily for me I have found them, and I can liberally and conscientiously do so.

The modest work which I have just completed, in conjunction with a friend, relates, as its title tells, to angling on the several streams of Derbyshire and Staffordshire, and it refers more particularly to fly-fishing on the Dove, which in several parts is the natural boundary that divides these counties. It has already proved an invaluable recommendation to this work, to have received permission to dedicate it to two of the most respectable and influential gentlemen that possess beautiful mansions and wide domains in the vicinity on each side of the before-mentioned, enchanting, and far-famed river. The many Noblemen and Gentlemen—chiefly resident in the midland

counties—who have done me so great an honour, and, I trust, conferred upon me so lasting and solid an advantage, by permitting me to place their powerful names on my subscription list, have been mainly induced to do so, through a certainty that nothing frivolous—nothing dishonourable—nothing immoral—nothing irreligious—in fine, nothing unworthy of the notice of the Noblemen and Gentlemen of Derbyshire and Staffordshire could appear fostered by the auspices of the Houses of Boothby and Russell. Gentlemen, need I then aver, that I feel myself bound towards you and your families by ties of the most fervent and undying gratitude? If it be at all necessary to make such an asseveration, I will do so with the profoundest humility and sincerity, and with a fixed determination, strong and immoveable as human

one can be, to steadfastly abide by such a declaration as long as it shall please Providence to permit me to remain on this side

“That undiscover’d country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns.”

Gentlemen, it would be insincere on my part—it would be an injustice to your characters as country gentlemen and as magistrates—it would be injurious to my own children, and to those of others, if I, for a moment, concealed what I firmly believe to have been your principal motive in affording me your encouragement and support in my present undertaking. You knew, Gentlemen, my late father, and you were personally aware, that he possessed, in addition to the secondary qualities of being an excellent fly-fisher, the far more sterling ones of being an honest man—of being a man worthy of a

family, one member of which, at least, has borne a character for religion, true piety, and charity, which has stood untarnished the severe test of a long trial of nearly three-score years—and, in consequence of that knowledge, you have resolved to visit the good deeds of the father and the uncle on the son and nephew—thereby, not only encouraging him to walk in their steps, but setting a striking example, by publicly rewarding him, to all children, not to disgrace by degeneracy their sires.

I could dilate, Gentlemen—such is the abundant fulness of my heart—to an interminable extent on the excellence and high repute of both your characters; but knowing that you are of that true disposition, which wishes not that “the left hand should know what the right hand doeth,” I refrain from at-

tempting to blazon the fame of your numerous good actions beyond the wide circle to which it already extends. Praying that you may never have the slightest occasion to regret the vast honour and service it has pleased you to confer upon me,

Permit me, Gentlemen,
To subscribe myself thus publicly,

The most grateful,

The most humble,

And the most faithful

Of your many obliged

And devoted servants,

WILLIAM SHIPLEY.

Ashborne, May 10, 1838.

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PREFACE.

THE treatise, comprised in the following sheets, has been long and loudly called for. When I make this assertion, I do not mean to censure by any criticism it may at first sight seem to imply, the labours of other writers on the same subject. I merely state a fact. That fact must be an apology for my assuming in the face of the public the superiority—certainly not on a matter of vital importance to society—that is supposed to attach to the character of authors. To prove the fact, I shall write that which every body in the neighbourhood knows to be a true story.

My father, the late William Shipley of Ashborne, in which town he was born and resided until he had fully completed the term of years allotted to the age of man, was the best fly-fisher that appeared

on the banks of the Dove during the last fifty years. I do not say this so much of my own judgment, as of that of all who knew him. Even the irritable, and, I fear, enviable race of anglers by trade—a race remarkably constipated when they are asked their opinion of the merits of a rival, or when they are asked for any useful information relative to their craft, lest, by freely giving it, they may injure their own reputation—universally acknowledged, I do not say to strangers, but to those that knew both themselves and my father, that, as a fly-fisher, they never saw his equal. The gentlemen resident in the neighbourhood, and those who came from afar to fly-fish in the Dove and the other streams adjacent to it, and who must have had abundant opportunity of judging by comparison of my father's merits, invariably said, and, like true and disinterested brothers of the angle, took a pleasure in making the avowal, that he was the most successful fly-fisher they had ever fished with in any

country. I have in my possession, and they are open to the perusal of any one, many letters from many gentlemen resident in the various parts of the empire to that effect.

Such being the reputation of my father, and it being known besides, that he had left several memoranda behind him relating to fly-fishing, made from observation during a successful practical experience of upwards of half a century, and that those documents were in my possession, I have been solicited year after year, I may say in truth, week after week, since his decease, which took place about eight years ago, to put them into a readable shape, and communicate them to the public. I should long since have done so, but I doubted my own abilities to perform the literary portion of such a task. I felt it would be a matter of chance and time, to find a gentleman who united within himself a love and practical knowledge of the art of fly-fishing, and a capacity of communicating by

writing all he knew of it, all he might learn from my father's notes, and all that I could teach him orally. Time—the great revealer of all things—of modest merit and of cunning criminality—brought me into contact last year, at Nottingham, with the very sort of coadjutor I wanted. At a single interview, at the hospitable board of a relative, I came to a fixed opinion, in reference to him; and reading shortly after certain sketches of fly-fishing in Derbyshire, which appeared in a celebrated sporting London journal,* and from certain allusions in them knowing them to be his, I resolved (forgive the vulgar flippancy of the expression) to hook him. The world shall never know the bait I used, but he took it freely; and I had the pleasure, towards the end of last January, of landing him safely under my humble roof. He arrived fagged from over-exertion in certain literary engagements which he had just completed in London, and dis-

* Bell's Life.

pirited on account of certain crosses in — ; but, stop, I must not meddle with the feelings of his heart, for they are the only matters upon which a child may not govern him. I treated him Derbyshire fashion—my hospitality with that of my family was, perchance, rude, but it was frank-hearted. He seemed pleased with it, rallied, recovered, made himself at home. I showed him the scenery of the neighbourhood, brought him suddenly on the most interesting parts of the Dove, and never shall I forget the fishing enthusiasm excited in him by the sight of that lovely stream. He uttered on its banks some fifty rhapsodical speeches, all of them, save one, in some language, or languages, which I understood not. I feared he was possessed of the “gift of tongues.” He became calmer, took me under the arm, and turning his back upon the river, and directing his steps homewards, he began singing, not very melodiously by-the-by, the following stanza :

“Oh ! my beloved nymph, fair Dove ;
 Princess of rivers, how I love
 Upon thy flowery banks to lie ;
 And view thy silver stream,
 When gilded by a summer's beam !
 And in it all thy wanton fry,
 Playing at liberty :
 And with my angle, upon them
 The all of treachery
 I ever learn'd, industriously to try !”

“To-morrow we will set to work,” said
 he, and then we talked of divers matters
 not connected with fishing.

In the morning I laid my father's notes
 before him. He read them with silent
 avidity, called me into the room, and
 questioned me, touching my own fishing
 acquirements, with as much preciseness
 and pertinacity, as if he had been deputed
 to examine me as to my fitness to become
 chairman of the Walton-and-Cotton Club.
 After an examination of more than two
 hours, of which he took close short-hand
 notes, he finished by assuring me in
 rather a solemn tone, but which was yet
 full of sincerity and earnestness, that,

“with the blessing of God, we should manage a good and useful book on fly-fishing betwixt us.” I slept well that night.

He has been frequently pleased to tell me during the progress of my work, that the benefit he received from my oral information was such, that, notwithstanding my father’s notes and his own knowledge, he could not have produced a standard work without it. I do not take the compliment to myself. If I understand any thing of fly-fishing, if I am the “capital” fly-fisher he says I am, I owe it to my father’s instructions. Him I followed throughout all my boyhood, and during a great portion of my manhood, in his fishing excursions—him I observed—him I listened to—I treasured up his practice and his principles, and whatever merit is due to my share in the work, I willingly offer it as a just and due homage to his memory. I have now stated why I asserted at the out-set, that the following work had been “called for ;” and I have

also given a rapid history of the circumstances under which it has been begun.

The text contains, therefore, the united opinions, information, and instructions of three individuals, founded on long, extensive, and very varied experience ; and to that text are added extracts from every author that has been considered of sufficient authority to have his opinions placed in juxtaposition with our own. In quoting an author, care has been taken to mention his name. The reader will have, therefore, a new treatise on the art of fly-fishing, and he will at the same time have an opportunity of dwelling on the instructions relative to important and disputed points of every writer of reputation. The plan adopted will be found at least useful if not amusing.

Touching amusement, I have a word or two to say. I have been advised to allow that to be a secondary point ; and knowing the sound judgment of those who were friendly enough to tender me such advice, I have followed it. The book, will, conse-

quently, be found rather a book of information than of mere amusement; but let the reader bear in mind, that it is written on an amusing art, and he will agree with me, that it would have been a task of supererogation and of self-sufficiency, to attempt “to paint the lily, to gild refined gold.” It is written in a plain, straightforward style, suitable, I hope, to the subject; but of that I dare not judge. I tremblingly see the critic’s rod lifted up before me; but while he wields it, let him lay it on mercifully, when he reflects that his victim is a meek and modest “brother of the rod.”

I hope that the different authors whose names I have made use of, will perceive that I have done so in a perfect spirit of fairness, and with the laudable purpose of disseminating as widely as possible a knowledge and a love of the art we all profess and are fond of. If I have done any of them the slightest wrong, I shall be ready, when it is pointed out to me

and proved, to make any atonement and compensation in my power.

In the body of the work I have expressed my deep sense of gratitude towards each and all of my subscribers ; but lest it should be overlooked in the hurry of perusal, I here express it once more most heart-fully, most sincerely, most gratefully. To a few of those subscribers I have a peculiar debt to acknowledge—for their personal exertions in my behalf—and for the loan of many valuable books. No one knows with what cordial pleasure I do so ! I beg the following gentlemen to receive my grateful thanks on the two points just referred to—to Sir Henry Fitzherbert, Bart., of Tissington Hall ; to the Rev. Brooke Boothby, of Ashborne Hall ; to the Rev. Court Granville, of Calwich Abbey ; to Maitland Dashwood, Esq. ; to John Silvester, Esq. Grove Hall ; to Richard Manley, Esq. Manchester ; to John Stokes, Esq., of Oak-over Hall ; to Rupert Griffin, Esq., Rose Cottage ; to the Rev. Henry Buckston, of

Bradley ; to Charles Kelly Cooper, Esq. ; to Wm. Hurd Wood, Esq. ; to John Buxton, Esq. ; to Abraham Wheatcroft, Esq. Cromford ; and to many of my more immediate neighbours.

Some unavoidable errors will have, I fear, crept into this work, for it has been written, printed, and published in the shortest space of time ever allowed for the production of a work of its nature and size. This, perhaps, is no commendation, but a spirit of frankness induces me to mention it, rather than a desire to put it forward as a plea for the forgiveness of errors. I beg the reader to bear in mind, that in order to fulfill my engagements with my subscribers, I have been necessarily limited as to time, and that no human foresight could guard against delays which even the short space of a few weeks may, in the best-concerted matters, give rise to. Perhaps I am making an unnecessary confession, and that as few errors will be found in the following pages, as in works which smell

more rankly of a long and continuous consumption of the “midnight lamp,” I have only to say, that I earnestly hope so, and that I shall feel obliged to any reader, who, on the detection of errors, will point them out to me, in order that they may be rectified in succeeding editions—if called for.

W. S.

Ashborne, May 10, 1838.

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CHAPTER I.

IN PRAISE OF FLY-FISHING.

WHEN an author chooses of his own free-will a subject to write upon, it must of course be supposed, that he is attached to it. Attachment and devotion to a subject, whatever it may be, whether it embraces an art or a science, implies in a person of common sense, unswayed by foolish partiality or caprice, a knowledge of that subject. From our boyhood upwards—and we have been now man and boy full thirty years—we have been, and still are, passionately attached to the amusement of angling, at least to those higher and more difficult branches of the art which come under the heads of fly-fishing and trolling. Now the range of our intellect must be very limited indeed—we must be sadly deficient both in memory and observation—if, for nearly a space of time that would comprehend a quintuple apprenticeship, we have followed, we may say, perseveringly pursued, an art without

becoming acquainted with its principles in general and in detail. We will not mince the matter, nor assume a mock modesty, which is nothing more than the flimsy and threadbare disguise of vanity and presumption ; but we will, in the spirit of unaffected candour — and a similar spirit shall be found running, in deep vein, through every page of this book — acknowledge our love for the art we write about, and confess that we think we have practised it long enough to become humble professors of it.

If a man amuses himself innocently, it neither becomes the philosopher nor the man of the world to scoff at him, or to ridicule contemptuously his pursuits. Live and let live, amuse yourself, and let others do so likewise, is a charitable maxim, and one that ought to be observed by all brothers of the angle. While we observe it, while we studiously avoid giving offence to the patient, placid, plodding bottom-fisher — while we consider him entirely free from the charges of cruelty brought against him by the overweeningly sensitive and squeamish* — while

* Nothing ever hurled against angling has alarmed anglers more than the following lines from, in our opinion, the best written, the most popular, and the most dangerously-immoral poem of our time :

we disclaim any thing that can be fairly considered as a cruel disposition on the part of anglers, we cannot refrain from exalting above all others that division of the art of angling in laud of which this chapter is written.

“And angling too, that solitary vice,
 Whatever Isaak Walton sings or says:
 The quaint old cruel coxcomb in his gullet
 Should have a hook and a small trout to pull it.”

Byron's Don Juan, canto XII. stanza 16.

Not only do these four verses contain severe and chosen epithets of abuse launched against the common father of anglers, but they convey a strong censure against the art itself — the whole art of angling — calling it “a solitary vice,” that is, a vice of the very worst sort, since it must be founded on self and unparticipated enjoyment. For our parts we have always smiled at the noble poet's indignation against the cruelty of anglers, and the more so, since that indignation is expressed in a work, the hero of which is a model of refined cruelty — one of those lax, yet interesting young gentlemen, who think less of breaking a woman's heart — be she maid, wife, or widow — than poor quiet old Isaak would of paining a grasshopper. Angling a “solitary vice!” Gambling, dog-fighting, boxing, intrigues, both with married and with single, are certainly not “solitary” vices; but that is the only negative praise that can attach to them; and he who has been known to indulge in and to patronise them, must have been in rather a maudlin mood when he spun the above verses. Captain Medwin, in his *Angler in Wales*, who knew Lord Byron, says of the noble poet, that “he was always straining at some paradox to startle with. I believe he never threw a fly in his life, or, except at Newstead, in some dull pond, ever wetted a line, or used any other bait than a worm.” There can be but little doubt, that Lord Byron did not mean his censure to apply to fly-fishers; but, as the text stands, it is directed against anglers in general, and for that reason we have noticed it. In concluding this note we beg to say, that we do not hold Walton wholly

In every art, that branch of it which is most difficult, and which requires the greatest exercise of our ingenuity and of mental and manual ability, must be the most highly prized, the most interesting, the most exciting, and must be, when completely mastered, were it only for the consciousness of superiority that it inspires, and the laudable complacency that always accompanies the overcoming of difficulties, the most amusing. Let us take, for the sake of familiar illustration, the art of painting. The mere house-painter, in the practice of his art, must feel less pleasure than the sign-painter, the sign-painter less than the portrait-painter, the portrait-painter less than the landscape-painter, and the latter, though the assertion, we are aware, will be contested, less than the historical-painter, who exercises his art in its highest and most refined state.

harmless of the charge brought against him by Byron, since the patriarch of the rod thus tells you to use your frog, that he may continue alive: "Put your hook into his mouth, which you may easily do from the middle of April till August; and then the frog's mouth grows up, and he continues so for at least six months without eating, but is sustained, none but He whose Name is Wonderful knows how: I say, put your hook, I mean the arming-wire, through his mouth, and out at his gills; and then with a fine needle and silk sew the upper part of his leg with only one stitch to the arming-wire of your hook; or tie the frog's leg above the upper joint to the armed wire; and in so doing, use him as though you loved him, that is, harm him as little as you may possibly, that he may live the longer."

The amusement derived from angling has likewise its gradations, more or less intense, according to the way in which it is practised. The patient barbel-fisher, who is obliged to bait, night after night, his fishing-ground, and to sit, hour after hour, watching the bending of his rod or the sinking of his float, and who, in the end, can only hope to catch some of the worst fish that swim in our rivers, enjoys an amusement less exciting than the middle-fisher, that is, than he who trolls with a minnow for perch or trout, or with a gudgeon for pike; and the middle-fisher's pleasurable excitement is less than that of him who angles at the top, or fly-fishes. The fly-fisher has chosen the most difficult branch of the art of angling, and as little really worth possessing is given to us in this world without some portion of pain and labour, he enjoys, when the pain and labour of learning his art is over, a pleasure far keener than that of those anglers who do not venture beyond the lower and more easily-acquired divisions of the art.

One of the first encouragements that presents itself to the fly-fisher is, that he knows that he is in pursuit, not of the coarse fish—the *vilains*—of the water, but of those which in form and in flavour are the finest and most delicate, and, (without meaning any offence to

the class to which we ourselves belong, but in order to use an epithet in contradistinction to the French one already used with respect to all coarse fish), which we will call, the aristocracy of the water.* The fish that generally take the fly are the salmon, the trout, and the grayling, with their varieties, and every body will allow that they are the noblest, the best, and the most beautiful of the fresh-water finny tribe; and every fisher of any experience will also allow, that the streams and rivers in which those fish are found, are, with respect to the nature of their waters, the variety of the channels through and over which they flow, the country in which they are situated, the formation of the banks that confine them, and the diversity of the scenery that surrounds them, the most romantic and the most picturesque of all those that irrigate, fertilise, and beautify the most enchanting districts of the happy land we live in.†

* The only thoroughly coarse fish — the only *vilain* or worthless plebeian of the waters — that greedily takes a fly, is the handsome but tasteless chub. The pike, the roach, and dace, also take the fly; but though we cannot place them amongst the aristocrats of the water, we may safely say that they belong to the respectable portion of the middle classes.

† Sir Humphrey Davy, encouraging a young fly-fisher, holds out the following allurements: — “ And I think I can promise you green meadows, shady trees, the song of the nightingale, and a full and clear river.

The fly-fisher, therefore, in addition to the encouragement of feeling that he is in pursuit of high game, knows that it is to be found among those scenes, in embellishing

“POIETES :—This last is, in my opinion, the most poetical object in nature. I will not fail to obey your summons. Pliny has, as well as I recollect, compared a river to human life. I have never read the passage in his works, but I have been a hundred times struck with the analogy, particularly amidst mountain scenery. The river, small and clear in its origin, gushes forth from rocks, falls into deep glens, and wantons and meanders through a wild and picturesque country, nourishing only the uncultivated tree or flower by its dew or spray. In this, its state of infancy and youth, it may be compared to the human mind in which fancy and strength of mind are predominant—it is more beautiful than useful. When the different rills or torrents join, and descend into the plain, it becomes slow and stately in its motions; it is applied to move machinery, to irrigate meadows, and to bear upon its bosom the stately barge—in this mature state, it is deep, strong, and useful. As it flows on towards the sea, it loses its force and its motion, and at last, as it were, becomes lost and mingled with the mighty abyss of waters.

“HALIEUS :—One might pursue the metaphor still further, and say, that in its origin, its thundering and foam, when it carries down clay from the bank, and becomes impure, it resembles the youthful mind affected by dangerous passions. And the influence of a lake, in calming and clearing the turbid water, may be compared to the effect of reason in more mature life, when the calm, deep, cool, and unimpassioned mind is freed from its fever, its troubles, bubbles, noise, and foam. And, above all, the sources of a river—which may be considered as belonging to the atmosphere—and its termination in the ocean, may be regarded as imaging the divine origin of the human mind, and its being ultimately returned to, and lost in, the Infinite and Eternal Intelligence from which it originally sprung.” *Salmonia*, page 17.

which all-bountiful Nature seems to have exerted herself with all the generous and unsparing love, and disinterested and delicate devotion, of maternity.

Fly-fishing is exempt from the principal drawbacks attendant on the other modes of angling. In the first place, the charge of cruelty cannot, with any justice, attach to it. The fly-fisher* tortures no insect, no reptile, no living animal, in pursuing his recreation. He uses artificial baits; and even the charge, that the fish he kills is put to unnecessary torture, cannot be thoroughly substantiated. Sir Humphrey Davy, a great authority on any point that relates to the organisation of fishes, says, and we entirely agree with him, that "it cannot be doubted, that the nervous system of fish, and cold-blooded animals in general, is less sensitive than that of warm-blooded animals. The hook usually is fixed in the cartilaginous part of the mouth, where there are no nerves; and a proof, that the sufferings of a hooked fish cannot be great, is found in the circumstance, that though a trout has been hooked and played for some minutes, he will often, after his escape with the artificial-fly in his mouth, take the natural fly, and feed as if nothing had happened; having apparently

* The artificial fly-fisher, of course, is meant.

learnt only from the experiment, that the artificial-fly is not proper for food. And I have caught pikes with four or five hooks in their mouths, and tackle which they had broken only a few minutes before; and the hooks seem to have had no other effect than that of serving as a sort of *sauce piquante*, urging them to seize another morsel of the same kind." Nothing can be said to beat down this argument, based as it is on absolute fact, unless, indeed, some one have recourse to a subterfuge of this nature, that he admits the facts recorded, but that they do not prove the non-suffering of the hooked fish, since the craving of appetite may be so great as to overpower the acuteness of external pain. We can ourselves, by the statement of a fact that occurred to us last summer, destroy completely the above supposition. We were fishing on an afternoon, at the weir a little to the south of Sawley bridge on the Trent, and lost, in consequence of a flaw in an old gut casting-line, the whole of it, with the exception of a link or so. We lost our three flies, and all by a small chub of less than a pound weight. From the way the fish were rising, sluggishly and slowly, we were certain that the pangs of appetite had little to do with their mounting towards our flies, and having gone to another part of the

river, and returned in about half an hour to where we lost the line, we hooked and killed with a red hackle — the same sort of fly it had taken before — the identical chub that had so short a time previously snapped our gut, having the red-hackle tail-fly stuck right through the under jaw, and the other flies and line entangled loosely round his body.* If fly-fishing is to be considered a cruel sport, there is scarcely one of our field-sports — and,

* Whilst Captain Medwin was fishing in a mill dam, his friend hooked a trout which proved too strong for his tackle, and he lost it; five minutes after the Captain found himself violently tugged, and succeeded in landing a trout of three pounds, with the identical hook and tackle of his companion in its mouth. *Angler.*

The following fact ought to put an end to any doubts we may have relative to the insensibility of fish: “Some time ago, two young gentlemen of Dumfries, while fishing at *Dalswinton Loch*, having expended their stock of worms, &c. had recourse to the expedient of picking out the eyes of the dead perch, and attaching them to their hooks, a bait which the perch is known to take quite as readily as any other. One of the perch caught in this manner struggled so much when taken out of the water, that the hook had been no sooner loosened from its mouth, than it came in contact with one of its own eyes, and actually tore it. The pain, if so it can be called, occasioned by this accident only made the fish struggle the harder, until at last it fairly slipped through the holder’s fingers, and again escaped to its native element. The disappointed fisher, still retaining the eye of the aquatic fugitive, adjusted it on the hook, and again committed his line to the waters. After a very short interval, on pulling up the line, he was astonished to find the identical perch that had eluded his grasp a few minutes before, and which literally perished by *swallowing its own eye*!”

as a nation, we take some pride in the nobleness and manliness of our field sports — that can be deemed free from the charge of cruelty. Hunting, coursing, shooting, horse-racing, nay, riding, may by the fastidious be tortured into cruel amusements. We believe, that, as a people, we are as humane — yes, more humane — for in a matter of this sort we will not hide the well-founded opinion we entertain, though we should be accused of national vanity — than any great and civilised people upon the surface of the globe ; whilst, at the same time, it is a fact universally acknowledged, that in all out-of-door sports we indulge ourselves more generally, and with keener zest, than any other modern nation ; that we understand them better, and that we introduce into their practice and pursuit the same ingenuity, the same spirit of improvement, discovery, and observation, the same desire to push every art, though it be one of mere amusement, to the very verge of perfection, that urges us to excel in all that relates to commerce and real civilisation, and which has placed the inhabitants of our little island in the proudest position ever occupied by the natives of any country. We will simply ask, whether the French, the Italians, the Spanish — people peculiarly attached to in-door amusements — who delight

in the atmosphere of the theatre, the ball-room, the gambling-house, the billiard and the coffee room, are a more humane people, a less cruel race of men, than we Englishmen are—than we who are the best shots, the best riders, the best anglers in the world. Let the historical annals of each nation be consulted; let the unhappy period, during which each nation was plunged in domestic or foreign strife,

“When foe met foe in one red burial blent,”

be surveyed, and then let the impartial examiner tell—we will not stickle for the palm of bravery—which nation showed most of true heroism—we mean, of humanity—of the goodly milk of human forgiveness and kindness. What is more—what is still more strongly in favour of our opinion, that an attachment to field-sports does not in any way pre-suppose a cruelty of disposition—we will confidently aver, that our landed gentry, and the people inhabiting the country, and who, of course, must be more addicted to the sports of the field, are not one jot less humane and tender-hearted than the inhabitants of large cities. We are strong partisans, and from motives we trust of humanity, to most out-of-door recreations. We believe that they tend to health of body, and to cheerfulness of mind; and that,

more than the amusements pursued in large towns, they make us study nature, and its various features and productions; and that whilst we do so, and are not distracted by streets, marts, shops, palaces — all the work of man's hands — we are brought more immediately into contact with the beneficent Creator of all things, and that we are more frequently led, with loving and grateful hearts, to exclaim, "God made the country, but man made the town!"*

* Such a sentiment as the following flows freely from the heart of a fly-fisher, after a day spent in the practice of his art among the romantic rivers and hills of Scotland: "I envy no quality of the mind or intellect in others; not genius, power, wit, or fancy; but if I could choose what would be most delightful, and I believe most useful to me, I should prefer a firm religious belief to every other blessing; for it makes life a discipline of goodness; creates new hopes, when all earthly hopes vanish; and throws over the decay, the destruction of existence, the most gorgeous of all lights; awakens life even in death, and from corruption and decay calls up beauty and divinity; makes an instrument of torture and of shame the ladder of ascent to paradise; and far above all combinations of earthly hopes, calls up the most delightful visions of palms and amaranths, the gardens of the blest, the security of everlasting joys, where the sensualist and the sceptic view only gloom, decay, annihilation, and despair!"

Salmonia, page 136.

Stephen Oliver, the younger, prettily remarks, "What Pinkerton, with his usual modesty, has said of collecting old coins, 'it is an innocent pursuit, and such as never engaged the attention of a bad man,' belongs more justly to angling—there is not a single angler to be found in the Newgate Calendar."

Fly-fishing is the only mode of angling in practice of which exercise is undergone. The exercise of trolling, perhaps, ought to be considered an exception; but in bottom-fishing the angler remains stationary, and were it not for the pure river breeze he inhales, and the scenery that gilds his imagination, it is doubtful whether his amusement would be a healthful one. Now the fly-fisher is, we may say, continually in motion, and there is scarcely a muscle in the body that is not called into play and into more robust developement by the practice of his art. Let any fly-fisher — we do not speak of one who has already fallen into “the sere and yellow leaf” — examine the muscles of his right arm, or of his left if he be left-handed, at the beginning and at the end of the fly-fishing season, and he will find them nearly as much developed in size and solidity, as if he had been in constant practice with foil in hand in the *salle d'armes*. Besides exercise, not too gentle nor yet too rough, the fly-fisher, always in motion, and not confined to one particular stream or pool, nor to one particular bank or rock, enjoys another great advantage, that of variety. We confess ourselves inconstant enough, not to wish to be tied down to any one spot, howsoever beautiful; and if fly-fishing possessed no other ad-

vantage over the other modes of angling, we should prefer it, because it allows us a wide range, and does not confine us to plain, hill, or valley. As we said before, those streams which most abound with fish that take the fly, run through the most beautiful scenery, and in themselves, on account of the obstructions they meet with in their course, and the inequalities of the bed they flow over, present all those changes of stream, rapid, reach, cascade, and quiet pool, which contribute to form that, to many, most beautiful object of inanimate nature — a perfect river. The fly-fisher following up his recreation, has a varied and living panorama ever before him.*

* The philosophical author of *Salmonia* elegantly says on this point, with regard to fly-fishing, that, “as to its poetical relations, it carries us into the most wild and beautiful scenery of nature; amongst the mountain lakes, and the clear and lovely streams that gush from the higher ranges of elevated hills, or that make their way through the cavities of calcareous strata. How delightful in the early spring, after the dull and tedious time of winter, when the frosts disappear, and the sunshine warms the earth and the waters, to wander forth by some clear stream, to see the leaf bursting from the purple bud, to scent the odours of the bank perfumed by the violet, and enamelled, as it were, with the primrose and the daisy; to wander upon the fresh turf below the shade of trees, whose bright blossoms are filled with the music of the bee; and on the surface of the waters to view the gaudy flies sparkling like animated gems in the sunbeams, whilst the bright and beautiful trout is watching them from below; to hear the twittering of the water birds, which, alarmed

at your approach, rapidly hide themselves beneath the flowers and leaves of the water-lily; and, as the season advances, to find all these objects changed for others of the same kind, but better and brighter, till the swallow and the trout contend, as it were, for the gaudy May-fly, and till, in pursuing your amusement in the calm and balmy evening, you are serenaded by the songs of the cheerful thrush and melodious nightingale, performing the offices of paternal love, in thickets ornamented with the rose and wood-bine!" *Salmonia*, page 10.

An anonymous writer, in that excellent Sunday newspaper, *THE ATLAS* — very properly named after the fabled giant, for the weight of information it carries — remarks in the clear chanticleer spirit of a lover of our art; "Without the most remote intention of upbraiding any with a fastidiousness or deficiency of taste; without wishing to make any body discontented with pre-conceived and long-settled notions of the external, visible, and practical delights of this busy and various earth; or without affecting any undue advantages of choice on our part, we do not hesitate to say, that trout-fishing with the fly is the perfection of sublunary pleasure — to those who are, in the full sense, 'brothers of the angle.'

'Let the huntsman praise his hounds,
Let the farmer praise his grounds,
And the squire his sweet-scented lawn;'

but a mountain stream, running through an inclined valley, shaded by expanding trees, with a cool wind breathing up against the current, and clouds not rainy but dark sailing over-head, is a more attractive sight to the lover of angling, than the best pack in all the country side, the rich golden-eared harvest, and the shorn lap of velvet before the manor-house, with all its promise of comfort and hints of ease.

"Select one of those days in June — in our modern turn-coat June, that (abandoning the path of its ancestors, which was one bright blaze of sunshine throughout) is now a capricious and lover-like month, sometimes smiling and sometimes frowning, and anon weeping, and always coquetting — select one of those days in June which your in-door people would call 'dubious;' let there be a smart

breeze blowing over the fern, and a gathering of clouds as dreary as may be, short of actual showers; sally forth on such a day with your rod, and your belted basket, and your book of 'glittering glories;' take to the gorge of the mountains, where the water, after having broken from its alpine birth-place, flows gently, but with vigour, through the depths of the valley — there take your stand under the shadow of an ancestral tree, and mark where the froth surges on the surface, and where the current is most impetuous — throw in boldly near the spot; your eye must be rapid and vigilant, your hand skilful and fastidious of its motions, your foot firm, and every nerve on the alert. Do not be dispirited by delay; patience is the angler's virtue; do not suppose yourself frustrated by a false rise, or by a failure in your first fly; persevere until you are convinced, that the sun from behind has cast your shadow on the stream, and so discovered you to the watchful prey, or that you have made an unlucky attempt, and betrayed yourself to some of the sagacious patriarchs of the stream, in either of which cases the sooner you take up another position the better; but if not, persevere, keep out of sight, be cautious and eagle-eyed — and you must succeed. It would be idle to fill up the accessories of the picture. Those who are true anglers need not to be recalled to the living delights that surround them in such a scene — the hills crested with foliage, the vanishing tints that float across the picturesque valley, the hum and buzz of the rippling water as it frets in the eddies, and sweeps against the loosely-rooted herbage under the shadow of the bank, and the sense of vitality with which the whole is inspired. These are to the angler a part of his own world; not the dreams of a sickly fancy, but the realities of revealed nature."

CHAPTER II.

COMMENDATION OF THE ART OF FLY-FISHING
CONTINUED.

THE moment any one of the slightest taste examines the tackle or “harness” which the fly-fisher uses, he must acknowledge that it is clean,* neat, delicate, and elegant. The essential property that marks all his gear is, lightness. His rod must be nearly as light and as limber as an enchanter’s wand: beautifully, lightly, gracefully, pliantly, tapering from the butt to the top; made of the lightest, the most pliant, the toughest, and the strongest wood; and joined and put together with ma-

*“In addition to the foregoing advantages, that of **CLEANLINESS** must not be omitted. How greatly preferable is the simple formation of an artificial fly of feathers and fur, to the unpleasantness attendant upon baiting a hook with worm, maggot, or paste! The one will last during the diversion of a whole day, and with care much longer, whilst the other requires adjusting or renewing after every trifling nibble; to say nothing of the cruelty which attaches to the introduction of a hook into the worm whilst living, or the extraction of a gorged hook from the entrails of a ravenous fish.” *Bainbridge.*

thematical precision. His reel-line must possess the same qualities—be light, strong, tapering; and his casting-line, or that to which the flies are attached, and which is cast upon the water, must be of the finest gut, scarcely thicker than the threads the field-spider spins from plant to plant. His hooks, and the materials attached to them, in order to imitate those delicate water-flies fish prey upon, must, in many instances, present an object, hardly more bulky than the little “worm pricked from the lazy finger of a maid.” It is this delicacy of tackle that is the chief source of the charming excitement felt by the fly-fisher. Nothing depends upon brute force; every thing is dependant on art, and on art, the execution of which requires the most consummate delicacy. Throw your flies rudely, and, crack! they and your casting-line are gone, or else you make a splash upon the water, that will scare away the greediest fish in it! Hook your fish too roughly, and he will sail away with your line, or fracture your rod; and, after you have hooked him, play him with too rude a hand, and you will either tear the hook from out his flesh, or, with a lunge, he will scud away with a portion of your “harness!” You know all this—you know the danger of any violence on your part—you know that victory

is only to be obtained by gentleness; and when the battle is over, you have the pleasure of beholding your prostrate foe, beaten in his own element, forced from it, and with weapons so weak, that, if strength could compete with art, you would not have been able to hold him in check for a moment. You feel that you could not have accomplished such a feat without exercising great command over your own faculties, without exercising patience, ingenuity, cunning of hand and of mind; that you have been putting in practice the good old advice, *suaviter in modo*; and that you have just proved, that, in almost all contentions for mastery, “an ounce of oil goes farther than a pound of vinegar.” Moreover, this light tackle of yours is portable within a very small compass; it is easily put together; and though your fingers may be as delicate, and as white, and as soft, as the exquisite’s, who, with hands well steeped in fragrant and softening cosmetics, sleeps in kid gloves, you need not be afraid of tarnishing their hue, or diminishing their velvet softness. You have no worms nor any other disagreeable or dirty bait to finger; the materials you have to manipulate are as clean and as delicate as those that enter into the composition of the entomologist’s cabinet. Every one who goes in search of fish, either

for gain or for pleasure, employs art, in some degree; “but,” as Sir H. Davy truly says, “that kind of it [search] requiring most art, may be said to characterise man in his highest or intellectual state: and the fisher for trout or grayling with the fly, employs not only machinery to assist his physical powers, but applies sagacity to conquer difficulties; and the pleasure derived from ingenious resources and devices, as well as from active pursuit, belongs to this amusement. Then, as to its philosophical tendency, it is a pursuit of moral discipline, requiring patience, forbearance, and command of temper. As connected with natural science, it may be vaunted as demanding a knowledge of the habits of a considerable tribe of created beings — fishes, and the animals that they prey upon, and an acquaintance with the signs and tokens of the weather and its changes, the nature of waters and of the atmosphere.”

Fly-fishing is so graceful and elegant an art, requiring in the practice so much minute attention and delicate manipulation, so much quickness of eye and sensitiveness of touch, so much ready apprehension, and which carries us in its pursuit into so many scenes that cast a glow over the fancy and the imagination, that we are not surprised to see it chosen, as

an out-of-door recreation, by some of the most intellectual ladies in the land. An old English lady, “ Dame Juliana Berners, prioress of the nunnery of Sopwell, near St. Alban’s, a lady of a noble family, and celebrated for her learning and accomplishments by Leland, Bale, Pits, Bishop Tanner, and others,” was the first who wrote upon the art of fishing with a rod ; and we think it extremely unlikely, that a female at the head of a religious establishment, in which religion and chastity walked, like angel twins, side by side, would have written in laud of an art, if there were any thing in it at all derogatory from the high religious and virtuous tone that has ever characterised Englishwomen. It contains nothing of the sort ; and if, in our in-door amusements, our thoughts, words, and actions are refined by the presiding companionship of females, we ought to do all that lies in our power to attract them to accompany us, and to participate in those field enjoyments which seem most adapted to the tasteful texture of their minds, and to the delicate structure of their persons.

Fly-fishing has still another recommendation. It may be considered of pure British growth and practice. Out of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, it will be in vain

for you to look for a fly-fisher. We have roamed through most of the countries of Europe, and though here and there we did meet with a foreign fly-fisher or two, they were so “few and far between,” nearly all of them having acquired a smattering of the art in this country; and their tackle was so rude, and their mode of using it so un-English-like, that we may safely say that the art is peculiar to

“The land of the brave and free.”

Long may it continue so! And if in this our modest treatise upon it, we add to its further extension, and draw one disciple more over to the “gentle craft,” we shall not, so lowly is our ambition, repine that our labours have been thrown away.

As a conclusion to this chapter, we will subjoin a few extracts from different authors in praise of fly-fishing: — “Fly-fishing, or fishing at the top of the water, is the most genteel, ingenious, pleasant, and profitable of the innocent recreations of angling; to the perfect accomplishment of which is required, not only great attention and frequent practice, but also diligent observation and considerable judgment. It is the cleanest and neatest that can possibly be imagined, being quite free from the trouble of baiting your hook or foul-

ing your fingers. The exercise it requires you to take is moderate and gentle, not being confined long to any part of the river, but moving from stream to stream. The fish that are caught in this manner are of the best and most delicate sorts; and when the water is in order, and plenty of flies, there are a great number of fishes to be taken. The preparation of the materials for the artificial fly, and the skill and contrivance in making them, and, comparing them with the natural, is a very pleasing amusement. The manner of the fishes taking them, which is by rising to the surface of the water, and sometimes out of it, gives the angler a very agreeable surprise, and the length and slightness of line greatly adds to the pleasure of tiring and killing them after they are hooked.” *Angler’s Museum.*

Mr. Taylor, who wrote in 1800, and whose book is tolerably esteemed by anglers, writes very much in the same words in praise of fly-fishing:—“ I shall here remark, that this ingenious and delightful part of angling is, in every respect, superior to all the rest put together; it is the nicest, cleanest, and most enlivening that can be; giving no trouble in baiting the hook, which occasions dirty fingers, and thereby renders the sport rather unpleasant to persons of *nice* ideas.” The rest of

Mr. Taylor's further remarks are so manifestly copied, or rather garbled from the extract we have already given from the *Angler's Museum*, that we shall dispense with quoting them.

Mr. Jesse, in "His Rambles," who understands trolling for pike well, but who is not certainly a skilful fly-fisher, says, "I am not about to make any comparison between the pleasure of trolling and that of fly-fishing. They may both be enjoyed in their several ways, and trolling may be had when fly-fishing cannot. I always consider the mere art of fishing, as a secondary consideration. I connect with it the enjoyment of the country, the song of birds, the beauty of the day, the refreshment of mind, and the calmness of thought which these bring with them. 'If,' as an old writer remarks, 'an angler is weary, his sport refreshes him; if melancholy, it cheers him; if in pain, it eases him.' This is the prosperity of the fisher. Patience and hope are the two chiefest pillars that support him. Cowper appears to have had this feeling, when he remarked,

'O! friendly to the best pursuits of man,
 Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,
 Domestic life in rural pleasure past,
 Few know the value, and few taste the peace.'

“Perhaps there is no pleasure to be enjoyed at a more easy rate than that of angling, one more conducive to health, or which composes the mind to that quiet and serenity which can only be appreciated by those who have experienced the happiness they bring with them. An old angler has justly remarked, that he who lives *Sibi et Deo*, leads the most happy life; and when we reflect that most of our earthly hopes are attended with anxiety — that ambition, and riches, and power, generally have some cares or evils to counterbalance them, the contented angler may pursue his course, enjoying his beloved recreation, with a mind unruffled, like the stream he wanders along.”

The following and the last extract in praise of fly-fishing is from the *Angler's Souvenir*, a book written with much spirit, but, perhaps, in a style rather too barbed, to please generally the unoffensive race of gentle craftsmen: — “Fly-fishing is most assuredly that branch of angling which is most exciting, and which requires the greatest skill, with the greatest personal exertion, to insure success. Fly-fishing, in a preserved water, where a gentleman, perchance in ball-room dress, alights from his carriage to take an hour or two's easy amusement, is no more like fly-fishing in a

mountain stream, where the angler wanders free to seek his fish where he will, and take them where he can, than slaughtering pheasants, in a manner, fed at the barn-door, and almost as tame as the poultry which are regularly bred in the yard, can be compared to the active exertion of grouse-shooting. The angler who lives in the neighbourhood of, or visits even the best trout streams, has not unfrequently to walk miles, if he wishes to bring home a well-filled creel, before he finds it worth his while to make a cast. When he has reached a place where trout are plentiful, and disposed to rise, his labours then only commence. He now and then hooks a large trout, which he has to keep in play for some time before he can draw him to land. The fish has run all the line out, and with strong effort is making up or down the stream; and the angler being no longer able to follow him on the shore — for a tree, a rock, or a row of alders prevent him; — and knowing that his tackle, which, towards the hooks, is of the finest gut, will not hold the trout, and rather than lose the speckled beauty, three pounds weight at the least, into the water he goes, up to his knees, and possibly a yard above, the first step. And thus he continues leading a sort of amphibious life, now on land, now in

the water, for nearly half a day, till he has killed his creel full, about the size of a fish-woman's pannier, with some three or four dozen besides, strung on his garters, and suspended over his rod. In this guise, light-hearted — for he has reason to be proud of his success — though heavily laden, he takes his way homeward; and there does he, for the first time, note how rapidly the hours have fled. He came out about two in the afternoon, just thinking to try if the trout would rise, as there had been a shower in the morning, and the water was a little coloured; and he now perceives, that the sun, which is shedding a flood of glory through the rosy clouds that for half an hour before partly obscured his rays, will in ten minutes sink behind the western hill, although it be the twenty-first of June. Involuntarily he stands for a while to gaze upon the scene. Everything around him, in the solitude of the hills — for there is no human dwelling within five miles — appears quiet and composed, but not sad. The face of nature appears with a chastened loveliness, induced by the departing day; the winds are sleeping, and so are the birds — lark and linnet, blackbird and thrush; the leaves of the aspen are seen to move, but not heard to rustle: the bubbling of the

stream, as it hurries on over rocks and pebbles, is only heard. The angler's mind is filled with unutterable thoughts — with wishes pure, and aspirations high. From his heart he pours, as he turns towards home,

‘Thanks to the glorious God of heaven,
Which sent this summer day.’

The exercise which the angler takes when fly-fishing, is no less conducive to the health of his body, than the influence of pleasing objects contributes to a contented mind. He is up in the summer morning with the first note of the lark ; and ere he return he has walked twenty miles

‘By burn and flowery brae,
Meadow green and mountain grey ;’

and has eaten nothing since he dispatched a hasty breakfast of bread and milk about four in the morning ; nor drunk, except a glass of cogniac or glenlivat, qualified with a dash of pure spring water, from the stone trough of a way-side well, on his way home. When he goes to the water-side, as it is more than likely that he will have to wade, he puts on a pair of lamb's-wool socks, and an extra pair in his pocket. Should his feet be wet when he leaves off fishing, he exchanges his wet socks

for a pair of dry ones, and walks home in a state of exceeding great comfort; the glass of 'cold without,' which he took at the well, just after changing his socks, having sent the blood tingling to his toe-ends."

We think we have now sufficiently proved, and yet, if we were so minded, we could bring further testimony to our aid, the excellency, the elegance, the high and exciting amusement, the harmlessness, and the humanity of fly-fishing. But, as names are better than mere words, and facts more persuasive than the most eloquently-urged argumentation, we will mention the names of a few distinguished persons who patronised and practised fly-fishing. Geo. IV., the most highly-cultivated minded monarch of the Brunswick line that ever swayed the sceptre of these realms, was a fly-fisher. His royal brother, the duke of Sussex, is a fly-fisher. Nelson, the hero of a hundred fights — the Napoleon of the ocean — used to fly-fish in the Wandle, near his country-seat at Merton, Surrey, and so much was he attached to the amusement, that after the loss of his right arm he continued to practise with his left. Sir Humphrey Davy, the greatest chemist of modern times, and the humane inventor of the safety-lamp, which has saved the lives of thousands of the most useful

of mankind, was *intus et in cute* a fly-fisher. The first voluminous writer on the art was Charles Cotton, Esq., of Beresford, near Ashborne, a gentleman by birth, and far less known to the generality of readers, for his poetical and literary attainments, than he deserves. He was a true country gentleman, and, if not a profound scholar, he was a very general and elegant one. "Dr. Paley," according to Sir H. Davy, "was ardently attached to the amusement of fly-fishing; so much so, that when the bishop of Durham inquired of him, when one of his most important works would be finished, he said, with great simplicity and good-humour, 'My Lord, I shall work steadily at it when the fly-fishing season is over,' as if this were the business of his life." Robert Burns, Mr. Hogg (the Ettrick Shepherd), Professor Wilson (the Great Christopher North), all great poets, were good fly-fishers, and ardently attached to the sport. Thomson, the immortal author of the SEASONS, and of that still (in our opinion) superior poem, THE CASTLE OF INDOLENCE, and Wordsworth, the most philosophical poet of any age or clime, were fly-fishers. Emerson, the mathematician, Dr. Wollaston and Dr. Birch, were also fly-fishers. So are Professor Rennie of King's College, and Mr. Jesse,

author of *Gleanings in Natural History*; and both these learned gentlemen have written treatises on the art. We could mention several more distinguished living individuals who are lovers of the art; but we think it will fully answer our purpose, to refer the reader to our list of patrons and subscribers.* In that list will be seen the names of the first nobility of our country—first in rank, in ancientness of race, in vast territorial possessions, in manly virtue, and in high standard of intellect. That list comprises—and we feel justly proud, and profoundly grateful in recording it—the names of the first warriors, the first statesmen, the first political and literary characters of our time—of men, who, with risk of life, and loss of blood and limb, have defended, and upheld, and augmented, the glory and interests of our beloved country in the field, and in presence of

* From that list we cannot refrain from choosing the name of Sir Francis Chantrey. That name carries with it the highest distinction—that of genius—and that name is already entwined with the most interesting portion of the history of our country—with that part of it which treats, and shall have to treat, of the state and progress of the fine arts. The greatest and the most classically-chaste of living sculptors, is an ardent and excellent fly-fisher. Sir Walter Scott has said of this immortal artist, “We have ourselves seen the first sculptor in Europe, when he had taken two salmon on the same morning, and can well believe, that his sense of self-importance exceeded twenty-fold that which he felt on the production of any of the master-pieces which have immortalized him.”

the most redoubtable enemy we had ever to contend against — of men who have added to that glory and those interests in the cabinet, in the senate, and in the pulpit — who have adorned them by their literary productions — by men, who, in their private capacity of English gentlemen, in all their social duties and relations, give proofs that they would sanction no pursuit, the exercise of which would tend in the remotest degree to sully that triple emblem of our nationality and union — which bears enwreathed on it the rose, the thistle, and the shamrock — and which has braved, and which shall *still* brave for thousands of years the “battle and the breeze!”

CHAPTER III.

ON THE CHOICE, MAKE, MATERIALS, AND
QUALITIES OF A FLY-ROD.

IN this chapter we shall first state our own opinion as to the best sort of rods, and we shall then give the opinions and advice of the best judges and writers on the same subject. The importance to be attached to the qualities of a rod is very great. It is a matter of perfect impossibility to throw a fly with precision, or a line, so as that it may fall lightly on the water — two operations of absolute necessity — with a rod of improper construction, make, and material, no matter how experienced and skilful the hand that wields it. The opinions on the subject are various and conflicting; but we can safely and with confidence advise the fly-fisher to adhere to our judgment, as it has been formed by careful comparison (all judgment of any weight should have its source in extensive and cautious comparison, otherwise it will be worthless and one-sided) of the rods of many

manufacturers, and of many made by fishermen themselves. It is also impossible to strike at and hook a fish with certainty of success, or to play him confidently and without harm to your tackle, if your rod is of imperfect formation.

The Fly-fisher's Rod:—Let the but, or joint next the hand, be of ash, of the finest, smoothest, and longest grain; of that sort of ash of which the best and lightest cabriolet shafts are made; let the piece for your but be sawn out of the trunk of a straight and full-grown tree, which has been hewn down shortly before the winter solstice, when all trees are sapless; and let it be from a piece that has been seasoned in a dry place for years. The material cannot be too well seasoned, and should not be sawn too near the centre of the tree, but rather at a distance from the vein through which the pith runs.* Ash makes a hard, tough, and regularly pliant but, and there is only one objection to it, namely, that

* “Before wood of any description is cut into lengths, it should be perfectly seasoned; and whatever number of pieces the rod is to be composed of, between the but and the top-piece, they must all be cut from the same log, and not, as is too frequently done, the second part from one piece of wood, the third from another, and so on, which, not having undergone the same degrees of seasoning, will never play regularly in the hand.” *Bainbridge.*

This is excellent advice.

it is too weighty. To the fly-fisher of muscular wrist and arm, we recommend it as the least objectionable of all materials. The butts of the greater part of modern fly-rods are made of willow, and, perhaps, for the generality of fly-fishers, the material of that tree is the most appropriate. It is a lighter wood than that of the ash, and is, within a shade or two, equally springy and pliable; and though we give the preference to ash, on account of early habit, and on account of possessing, chiefly in consequence of long practice in wielding the rod, beyond the average muscularity of arm, still we recommend to most anglers, and to all beginners, the but made of willow. The two middle joints of the rod should invariably—we heed not the assertions of many authorities against us—be made of hickory, and not of lance-wood, which is more generally recommended by writers, and which is, as any one may perceive by comparing them, heavier, less firm, and yet less elastic than hickory. The top joint, two of which should belong, to guard against casualties, to every rod, should be made of bamboo-cane, and of nothing else, since no other material, as yet tried, has been found in any degree equal to it. We have been speaking of a four-jointed rod. Should your rod be of five joints, or even of the unusual,

and, in most instances, unnecessary length of six joints, let all the middle joints, that is, all those between the but and the top, be also of hickory. Most anglers recommend that the top joint should terminate with a piece of whale-bone of about six inches in length or rather less, but if your top joint be made of fine-grained bamboo, it can be reduced at the extreme end to sufficient thinness, to do away with the necessity of using whale-bone, and will prevent the defect, and a very serious one it is, of having your rod top-heavy. The but-end of your rod should be bored, for the purpose of carrying an extra top. The lower joints of the rod—we mean that part of the joint that enters the ferrule—should be brass shouldered, in order that the wood may be prevented from swelling when exposed to moisture, and from straining the ferrules and other parts of the rod, which it would do, during the process of unjointing your rod, if it were in a swoln state. Nothing can be more unwise than the advice of those persons who direct the joints of the rod to be dipped in water, that they may not separate in casting. All modern rods have two flattened loops of brass wire, placed in a direct line near and opposite to each other, at each end of every joint, which not only serve to keep the joints

firmly united, by whipping a thread of silk round them, but which are also used as a guide to put your rod together straight, that is, with all the loops through which the line passes in a direct line one with the other. Those who advise that your loops or rings should be large, give the very worst counsel, since large rings deprive the rod of three essential properties, lightness, elasticity, and gracefulness. On the contrary, your rings cannot possibly be too light, provided, which is by no means a great difficulty, they be well and firmly soldered. They should be of moderate size, rather too small than too large, and should, in their circle, gradually diminish from the but to the top. The size of the rings on the but should be No. 5; those on the second joint, No. 6; on the third joint, No. 7; and on the top joints, Nos. 8 and 9. They should be tied on the rod with the greatest possible neatness, and the finest twisted silk should be used in the process. The loops to which the rings are fastened should be cut with a scissors from the thin round plates of copper to which the dials of watches adhere, and which are composed of the finest-grained and toughest copper. They can be procured in abundance, and almost for asking, at the watch-maker's, since they are of no use to him after the dial has been so much injured as to require renovating.

One of the most constant and greatest defects in rods is, that they are made to taper too abruptly from a little above the spot the reel is placed on, down as far as the first joint. This defect is particularly remarkable in rods of Irish manufacture, which, though much vaunted by prejudiced anglers, are inferior to English rods; and their inferiority is mainly to be attributed to the great weight of their ferrules, weighing twice or three times more than ours, and to the mode of fastening the joints by means of screws, all which contributes to render their rods too heavy, and to neutralise the good properties which they otherwise possess. Your rod should taper in just proportion from butt to top, if not it will not bend with exact uniformity, and there will be an unequal stress on the different portions of it. When a rod tapers with mathematical exactness, its pliability will be in uniform proportion with the thickness and strength of its parts, and each part will have to bear a weight exactly in proportion with its power of bearing it. In a rod of fair proportions the second and third joints do most of the work, on them is greatest stress, and on them chiefly depends your success in throwing with precision your line, striking your fish, hooking and playing him. If they be defective in proportion, or composed of

improper material, no good qualities in the other parts of your rod can compensate for the imperfection. It is scarcely necessary to add, that there must be a moveable spike to your rod, to screw into the ferrule at the base of the but-end. Such spike or blade serves to fasten your rod in the ground whilst you land a fish, free your hooks from weeds, your lines from being entangled, or whilst you change your casting-line or flies. In tying up your joints after fishing, or in laying them by during the winter, be careful to place them straight and parallel with each other, lest they should contract a bend, or get strained, so as to render it a labour of difficulty to bring them back to their original formation.* A fly-rod is sufficiently long at from twelve to thirteen feet: thirteen feet and a half should be the utmost length.†

* "To preserve rods after use, let them be well rubbed with salad oil or tallow, and kept in a moderately dry place until the return of the angling season, when, after being carefully wiped, they will be found in excellent order. If the bottom piece be bored for the purpose of receiving a spare top, the inside should be oiled, by means of a piece of rag, fastened to the end of a stick."

Bainbridge.

† "The common length of a trout rod is from twelve to fourteen feet. Some persons prefer them even longer; but for the generality of streams the latter is quite sufficient, and for small rivers and brooks the former is much the most convenient and useful size." *Bainbridge.*

We shall now proceed to give the instructions of others on this subject ; and we begin with extracts from the most ancient professors, certainly rather with a view to satisfy curiosity than to communicate useful information.

Dame Juliana Berners, writing about the year 1486, gives the following curious recipe for rod-making:—"Ye shall kytte betweene Myghelmas and Candylmas, a fayr staffe, of a fadom and a halfe longe, and arme-grete, of hasyll, wyllowe or aspe; and bethe hym in an hote ouyn, and set hym euyn; thenne, lete hym cole and drye a moneth. Take thenne and frette (tie it about) hym faste with a coekeshote corde; and bynde hym to a fourme, or an euyn square grete tree. Take, thenne, a plumber's wire, that is euyn and streyghte, and sharpe at the one ende; and hete the sharpe ende in a charcole fyre tyll it be whyte, and brenne the staffe therwyth thorugh, euer streyghte in the pythe at bothe endes, tyll they mete; and after that brenne hym in the nether ende wyth a byrde-broche (bird-spit) and wyth other broches, eche gretter than other, and euer the grettest the laste; so that ye make your hole, aye, tapre were. Thenne lete hym lye styll, and kele two dayes; unfrette (unbind) hym thenne, and lete hym drye in an hous roof, in the smoke, tyll he be thurgh drye. In the

same season, take a fayr yerde of grene hasyll, and bethe him euen and streyghte, and lete it drye wyth the staffe; and whan they ben drye, make the yerde mete unto the hole in the staffe, unto halfe the length of the staffe; and to perfourme that other halfe of the croppe, take a fayr shote of blacke thornn, crabbe tree, medeler, or of jenytre, kytte in the same season, and well bethyd and streyghte, and frette theym togyder fetely, soo that the croppe maye justly entre all into the sayd hole; and thenne shaue your staffe, and make hym tapre were; thenne vyrell the staffe at bothe endes wyth long hopis of yren, or laton, in the clenest wise, wyth a pyke at the nether ende, fastynd wyth a rennyng vye, to take in and out your croppe; thenne set your croppe an handfull wythin the ouer ende of your staffe, in suche wise that it be as bigge there as in ony other place about; thenne arme your croppe at the ouer ende, downe to the frette, wyth a lyne of vj heeres, and dubbe the lyne, and frette it faste in the toppe wyth a bowe to fasten on your lyne; and thus shall ye make you a rodde soo prevy, that ye may walke therwyth; and there shall noo man wyte where abowte ye goo."

The Dame Juliana must have been a lady of powerful "thews and sinews," not very much macerated by fasting and prayer, prioress of a

nunnery though she was, since she was able to handle a rod, at least, according to her own calculation, fourteen feet long, and the but of which was an “arme-grete,” or somewhat about as thick as one’s arm. The “staffe,” or but, being “a fadom and a halfe longe,” makes nine feet; the middle joint being “a fayr yerde (yard) of grene hasyll,” when added to nine makes twelve feet; and the “toppe,” consisting of “a fayr shote (shoot) of blacke thornn,” must be computed at the lowest at two feet; thus making the fair angler’s rod full fourteen feet long — a length, and, consequently, a weight (and, remark, the joints are to be bound with long “hopis of yren” — hoops of iron) far too ponderous for the muscles of us degenerate modern males.

Cotton gives no directions for making a rod, but one of his commentators, Sir John Hawkins, thus supplies the deficiency: — “But for the neatest fly-rod you can make, get a yellow whole deal board that is free from knots; cut off about seven feet of the best end, and saw it into some square breadths; let a joiner plane off the angles and make it perfectly round, a little tapering, and this will serve for the stock; then piece it to a fine straight hazel, of about six feet long; and then a delicate piece of fine-grained yew, planed round like

an arrow, and tapering, with whalebone, as before, of about two feet in length. There is no determining precisely the length of a fly-rod; but one of fourteen feet is as long as can be well managed with one hand."

The same commentator, improving on the above instruction, says with much truth, "Here follows a description of such a neat, portable, and useful fly-rod, as no angler that has once tried it will ever be without. Let the joints be four in number, and made of hickory, or some such very tough wood, and two feet four inches in length, the largest joint not exceeding half an inch in thickness. The top must be bamboo shaved. And for the stock, let it be of ash, full in the grasp, of an equal length with the other joints; and with a strong ferrule at the smaller end, made to receive the large joint, which must be well shouldered and fitted to it with the utmost exactness." A rod made of the above proportions will be about thirteen feet and a half long, full long enough for all the trout and grayling streams of the midland counties.

Mr. Taylor, who certainly was a good angler, but rather of the old school, says, "Your rod for trout-fishing should be about fourteen feet in length; the bottom part made of well-seasoned ash or hazel, large enough towards

the but-end for the reel to fasten on properly; the middle part seasoned yew or hickory; the top of the same, well spliced, with about half a foot of good round whalebone to fit nicely, properly tapered to the end, and ringed neatly; and when put together it must be very regularly taper from bottom to top, with a good spring, and pliable almost to the hand,* for fly-fishing; but you should have another top, much stiffer, to put on for minnow and worm-fishing. The but-end of your rod should be bored so as to be adapted to hold either top, according as you change them, with a screw or cap at the end to keep it from dropping out. For fly-fishing only, your rod should be but of two parts, without ferrules, and the lower part longer than the upper part, with the small end of the former and the large end of the latter, cut nicely to fit, as for splicing, but pretty long; it may be tied together by the water-side, with a proper-sized twisted and waxed hempen thread, such as shoe-makers use; and when you have left off fishing, you should untie the rod, and wrap the string round both parts together, for the more con-

* Reader, in choosing a rod never follow this advice, for a rod can have no greater defect than that of being "pliable almost to the hand." If it be, you can neither throw a line, nor hook a fish well, and, above all, you can have no command over him when he is hooked.

veniently carrying it home. 'This sort of rod is by far the best, both for throwing out the line with more ease and exactness, and for easing it in playing the fish when hooked; and it will have a better spring, if properly made, than the other sort of rods.'

We agree with Mr. Taylor, with respect to the superiority, in the points he mentions, of the rod "of two parts, without ferrules;" and the best fly-rod we ever used was a small rod of this description, given to us in our boyhood by an Irish clergyman. With it we could throw a fly into a nut-shell. The chief objection to such a rod, and it is almost an insurmountable one for persons living in towns and far from rivers, is, that it is not portable, and that the putting of it together is troublesome. Gentlemen who live on the banks of fishing streams, and who have servants to put their tackle together for them, would do well to have this sort of rod. In this opinion we are glad to see ourselves supported by the authority of Mr. Rennie, who, in a note to the "Complete Angler," says, "The great objection to rods in many pieces is, that they are not sufficiently pliant; and no angler, who is as near his station as Mr. Cotton was to the Dove, should think of such a pieced rod as he describes."*

* "Some prefer them [rods] of two pieces only, which

Mr. Hansard, author of a valuable little work on "Salmon and Trout Fishing in Wales," says, that "the length and strength of rod must, of course, be proportioned to the size of the fish you may expect, and the width of the water in which you sport. A stiffer rod is to be preferred, as enabling the angler to throw with more exactness: it is also of great advantage in a strong breeze."

It is unquestionably easier to throw a line in a "strong breeze," or against the wind, with a stiff rod; but that is the only solitary advantage it possesses. In every other respect it is objectionable, and we defy any man to cast his line lightly on the water with a stiff rod. A stiff rod, and one pliable to the hand, are equally objectionable, though from different reasons. *Medio tutissimus ibis.*

Colonel Hawker, whom we deem rather too much conceited to be a profound adept in the

are spliced together about the middle. These certainly throw a fly in a neater manner than those encumbered with ferrules can possibly do, as the spring from the hand is uninterrupted, consequently, more regular; and they are admirably adapted for the use of an angler whose residence is near the scene of his diversion; but the awkwardness of length renders them troublesome and unwieldy companions, when a walk of some miles intervenes between the river and the angler's dwelling. This description of rod is in general use in the northern counties of England, where ferrules are considered very objectionable." *Bainbridge.*

“gentle craft,” offers excellent counsel on the matter in question. The gallant sportsman says, that “your fly-rod should be about twelve feet three inches long, and about fourteen ounces* in weight. It must not be top-heavy, nor it must not have too much play in the lower part, but the play should be just in proportion to the gradual tapering, by which there will be very little spring till after about the third foot of its length. A rod too pliable below is as bad a fault as being too stiff; and from being too small there (at the but) is, of course, more liable to be top-heavy, which nine rods out of ten are. The consequence is, they tire the hand, and do not drop the fly so neatly. I have seen some Irish rods, which, if they had not been too pliant, would have been worth any money.”

In the following recommendations respecting the choice of a rod, taken from the “Fly-fisher’s Entomology,” by Mr. Alfred Ronalds, the reader will perceive, that in some points that gentleman agrees with us; but that in others his opinion is widely different from ours. Mr.

* The generality of rods, of modern manufacture and of the length the colonel recommends, do not weigh more than twelve ounces. We have several rods in our possession thirteen feet and a half long, the average weight of which is under fourteen ounces. However, the weight the gallant colonel recommends is a very proper one.

Ronalds writes, "Like the bow of the archer, the rod of the angler should be duly proportioned in dimensions and weight, to the strength and stature of him who wields it. The strong or tall man may venture upon a rod about fourteen or fifteen feet long; but to the person who is shorter or less robust, one so short even as twelve or twelve feet and a half, and light in proportion, is recommended, as the command will be sooner obtained, and with very much less fatigue to the arm. The best materials are, ash for the stock, lance-wood for the middle, and bamboo for the top; the but should have a hole drilled down it, with a spare top in it, and a spike is made to screw into the end, which will be found useful to stick into the ground, and keep the rod upright, when landing a good fish. The ferrules of brass should fit into each other with screws. A good rod should be such that its pliability may be felt in the hand, yet it should not deviate or droop by its own weight, if held by the but in a horizontal position, more than three or four inches from a straight line. The rings are usually too small; not allowing such slight obstacles on the line, as can never be totally prevented, to run with sufficient freedom through them; they should all be of the size of those usually put upon the stock."

Professor Rennie, quoting Bainbridge, says, that "the best rods are made of ash for the bottom-piece, hickory for the middle, and lance-wood for the top-joints. If real bamboo can be procured of good quality, it is preferable to lance-wood. Rose-wood and partridge-wood, from the Brazils, may also be used for the top-pieces. The extreme length of the top-piece is usually composed of a few inches of whale-bone. The rings for the reel-line may be made by twisting a piece of soft brass wire round a tobacco-pipe, and soldering the ends together. They ought to diminish in size as they are made to approach the top, and must form a straight and regular line with each other when the rod is put up for use."

In an old work, written about the middle of the last century, entitled the "Sportsman's Dictionary," the following directions are to be found: — "If you fish with more than one hair, or with silk-worm gut, red deal is much the best, with hickory top, and about four yards long the whole rod; but for small fly, with single hair, about three yards, very slender, the top of the yellowish hickory, with whale-bone about nine inches, and very near as long as the stock; the stock of white deal, not too rush-grown; let it be thick at the bottom, which will prevent it from being top-heavy,

and make it light in the hand. The rod for a fly must by no means be top-heavy, but very well mounted, and exactly proportionable, as well as slender and gentle at top ; otherwise it will neither cast well, strike readily, nor ply and bend equally, which will very much endanger the line."

We have placed in this chapter every thing that is necessary, even for the most curious, to know respecting all that pertains to a fly-rod, and if the reader take the trouble to study and compare its contents, he may, to all useful intents and purposes, consider himself sufficiently learned on the subject.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE BEST SORTS OF LINES, REELS, HOOKS,
&c.

A REEL-LINE of twenty yards in length is sufficiently long for the river Dove, and for the other trout and grayling streams of the midland counties. For the lesser streams we recommend a line not longer than fifteen yards. A reel-line entirely made of silk is extremely objectionable, as it readily imbibes the water, and thereby becomes too heavy for being thrown lightly; a line entirely made of hair is equally objectionable, as it will not be pliant enough, and is too apt to kink. The best — decidedly the best — lines, are composed partly of silk, partly of hair. The proportions of both those materials necessary for the composition of a good line are as follow :

A line twenty yards long must consist of three twists; all of those twists must have each one very fine white silk thread, one fine white hair, two light-brown hairs, and one dark-

brown, making all together four hairs and one thread of silk for each twist, or three threads of silk and twelve hairs, to compose the thickness of the line. All good lines must be composed of three principal twists. The whole of this calculation refers to the thickest part of the line—that part next the reel. The bottom part of a twenty-yard line, or that part to which the casting-line is attached, must likewise consist of three chief twists, one of which to be made of one white thread of fine silk, one white hair, and one dark-brown hair; the other two twists to contain each one white thread of silk, and two light-brown hairs. A line thus made will taper properly, and be sufficiently strong and pliant in all its parts. Its colour will be a light-speckled brown, and suitable for the generality of waters.

A fifteen-yard reel-line, consisting of the following component parts, will be found best suited to light rods of about twelve feet long, and we confidently recommend it, both for material and colour, as beautifully adapted for small streams.

Like the former line it must consist of three principal twists, one of which must be made of one fine white silk thread, two fine white hairs, and two fine light-brown hairs; the second twist must be composed of one fine white silk

thread, and four fine white hairs; and the third twist must consist of one fine black hair, of two light-brown hairs, of one white hair, and of one fine white silk thread. This is the composition of the reel-end of the line. The end next the water must also be composed of three principal twists; of one white thread of silk, and one brown hair; of a second twist made of one black hair, and one white thread of silk; of a third, consisting of one light-brown hair, and one white silk thread. Such a line will be delicately taper, and its colour will be a sort of pepper-and-salt, with a light-brown sandy shade in it.* We recommend this line to ladies and youthful beginners.

Both those lines can be had at the fishing-tackle shops, and are the very best that can be used. The two next best are, first, a pale-green line of three chief twists, each twist to be composed of four white hairs, and one light-green silk thread; second, a pale-blue of the same number of twists, each twist one white hair, and one thread of light-blue silk. The line to be less bulky towards the water-end. There are hundreds of reel-lines made and

* “As to the colour of your line, you must be determined by that of the river in which you fish; but I have generally found, that a line of the colour of pepper-and-salt, which is made by mixing a black hair among the white ones in twisting, will suit any water.” *Angler's Museum*.

coloured differently, but beyond these four there is no choice. For our own parts we invariably use the two first. The colour of our lines is darker when on or in the water.

Casting-line: — This line is that to which your flies are attached, and which is cast upon the water. It must be composed of carefully-chosen silk-worm gut, of the roundest and the finest that can possibly be procured. Every link must be carefully examined, to see that there is no crack or flaw in it. The ends of each link, particularly the finer end, being generally rotten and worthless, must be unsparingly rejected. The whole line must be taper, and it is rendered so by knotting together the thicker links of gut at the top nearest the reel-line, and diminishing by degrees their thickness until you end with a link as fine, or nearly so, as a hair. The links must be knotted, not tied together or whipped, and the sort of knot to be used is the slip-knot, or the old angler's knot.* This knot is, we

* Though it is extremely easy to make this knot, we question whether we can by writing teach the mode of tying it. If the reader once saw the operation performed, he could do it himself immediately afterwards. We will try, however, if we cannot by plain speaking communicate this very important piece of information to our readers. Hold one piece of gut firmly, at the distance of an inch and a half from its end, between the fore-finger and thumb of

believe, peculiar to Derbyshire and Staffordshire, and, perhaps, we might say, to the anglers of the Dove and of the neighbouring

your left hand. Then take another link of gut, and holding it in the same way in your right hand, place it horizontally and parallel with the link of gut still held between the fore-finger and thumb of your left hand. The ends of the gut point, of course, in different directions — the link in your left hand, or rather that first placed in it, pointing to the right, the other link pointing to the left. So far the operation resembles that necessary to make the ordinary angler's knot. You now take that end of the gut which points to the right, and with the fore-finger and thumb of your right hand you form it into a circle about the size of a wedding-ring, the extreme end of the gut pointing upwards, which you pass twice over and under the other link of gut, and always taking into the operation the gut of the circle. You then pull towards your right hand the end of gut so passed, holding both pieces of gut still firmly between the fingers of your left hand, and the first half of the knot is made. You then reverse the whole gut, placing the knot already formed between the finger and thumb of your left hand, and the end of gut which before pointed to the left will now point towards the right. You take this end, in the very same way as you did before, and with your right-hand fore-finger and thumb, form it into a circle, and pass it twice under and over the link of gut which has been already knotted, and you afterwards pull the end tightly towards the right, always holding firmly in your left hand both links of gut. Two small knots are now formed in a line opposite to each other; you then leave go, and pulling the links in different directions, that is, right and left, the two knots close upon each other, and form the slide-knot. This knot will open, if the links, instead of being pulled to, be pushed back, and a sliding loop is formed, into which you insert the gut of your dropper knotted singly at the end. Pull the links then to, right and left, and your dropper is held fast in the knot. Cut off the ends close to the knot, and your operation is finished.

streams. Its advantages are many and great. It is easily executed, irrefragably strong, extremely small, becoming more so the more it be pulled, and affords by far the easiest and quickest mode of putting on and taking off your flies. By adopting this sort of knot you get rid of the old and clumsy way of looping on your flies.

If you fish with three flies, and in the streams of the midland counties we advise you never to fish with a greater number at a time, your casting-line must consist of two yards and a half of gut.* Your tail-fly, or stretcher, which ought to be your chief killing-fly, must be tied on a link of the finest gut, finer, if possible, than the

* Colonel Hawker says, "Use about eight feet of gut, and the addition of that on the tail-fly will bring the whole foot-line to about three yards. Put on your bob (dropper) fly a few inches below the middle; or, if in a weedy river, within little more than a yard of the other; lest, while playing a fish with the bob, your tail-fly should get caught in a weed. More gut than is here prescribed will be found an incumbrance when you want to get a fish up tight; insomuch, that, of the two, I would rather have a little less than more of it."

Bowlker, an authority of fair reputation, observes, that "An experienced fly-fisher will use three or four flies at the same time: the leading-fly should be fastened to the gut bottom by a water-knot, in preference to a loop; the first dropper about a yard from the leading-fly; the second dropper about eighteen inches above the first; and the third, if required, about a foot from the second." We recommend this *spacing* (to use a printer's word) of flies when four are attached to the casting-line.

water-end of your casting-line, to which it must be attached by means of the slip-knot. The length of the link on which the tail-fly, or stretcher, is tied, ought to be about nine inches long. The distance on your casting-line between each of your flies must be twenty inches. The length of the gut to which your droppers are tied, need not be more than two inches. The majority of anglers use and advise gut of three inches long, but we are sure from experience that they are in error. If you use four flies at a time on your casting-line, its length must be three yards; if you use five, the length must be three yards and a half. Those lines must be knotted in the same way, and made as equally taper, as the line of two yards and a half, and the tail-fly and droppers must be attached to them in a similar manner.

It will aid you very much in flinging out properly your casting-line, if you have one good length of horse-hair coming between it and the reel-line. This link of horse-hair must consist of four long and strong hairs twisted with the hand together, and they must be pulled from the tail of a chesnut or bay stallion, or gelding, of four or five years old. Never let the hair, either of fillies or mares, enter into the composition of your tackle.*

* “ Hair, if plucked from the tail of a young horse or

By far the easiest, and simplest, and best mode of dying your gut is, to place your lines, coiled up, in a saucer three parts full of common lukewarm writing-ink. One minute's steeping will be nearly sufficient to die it of the colour required. The moment you withdraw the gut from the ink, you must rinse it in clear cold water, and if, holding it between your eye and the light, you find it of too pale a colour, immerse it for half a minute longer in the ink. The colour produced is the best of all others, namely, a water-colour.*

mare, is not so good as that which is to be procured from a four-or-five-year-old gelding; but the best is to be had from the tail of a well-grown stallion; and those hairs are generally most free from blemish which grow from the middle of the tail." *Bainbridge.*

* This recipe, of course, is not chemically correct; but so few have been the improvements made in hair or gut staining, that we believe it will be found the safest and best. The receipt of our common father, Isaak Walton, is a good one: — "Take," says he, "a pint of strong ale, half a pound of soot, and a little quantity of the juice of walnut-tree leaves, and an equal quantity of alum; put these together into a pipkin, and boil them half an hour; and having so done, let it cool; and being cold put your hair (or gut) into it, and there let it lie; it will turn your hair to be a kind of water or glass colour, or greenish; and the longer you let it lie, the deeper coloured it will be."

When the water after a flood is coloured, you may use gut died of a light-brown colour. The following is an easy recipe:—To a strong infusion of coffee, add a little pounded alum; let the liquor become tepid, and steep your gut in it for a minute or two. The longer you let it lie, the deeper coloured it will be. A strong infusion of green tea, with a

Hooks: — The hooks we ordinarily use, and which in consequence we recommend, for fly-fishing, are those manufactured at Kendal* and at Redditch.† We find them in every respect suitable to the purposes of the fly-fisher. Before we state the proper sizes of

few logwood scrapings, kept lukewarm with the gut in it for twelve hours, will die the gut an excellent colour.

“The angler should be careful to fit the link (colour of) to the water; the rest of the line is not so material. A reddish sorrel hair, when the water is somewhat red on the decline of a flood; a light chesnut, when the water is of a gray colour; a lead-colour is preferable when the water is of an iron hue, which it frequently is in many rivers, when full without over-flowing; an amber foot-line is best when the water is low and clear as crystal.” *Johnson's Sportsman's Cabinet*.

A very old writer, author of the “*Experienced Angler, or Angling Improved*,” says, with regard to colour, “I like sorrel, white, and gray best; sorrel in muddy and boggy rivers, both the other for clear waters. I never could find such virtue or worth in other colours, to give them so high praise as some do, yet if any other have worth in it, I must yield it to the pale watery green, and if you fancy that you may die it thus: Take a pottle of alum-water, a large handful of marigolds, boil them until a yellow scum arise; then take half a pound of green copperas, and as much verdigris, beat them into a fine powder, put those with the gut into the alum-water, set all to cool for twelve hours, then take out the gut and lay it to dry.”

“For discoloured water it may be necessary to stain the gut; but in clear water ocular demonstration will prove that *white* is the least perceptible colour.” *Bainbridge*.

* The best Kendal hooks are manufactured by Messrs. Adlington and Hutchinson, Kendal, Cumberland.

† The best Redditch hooks are manufactured by Mr. Richard Wyers, and by Mr. Charles Swan, both of Redditch, Worcestershire.

those hooks, we beg the reader to remark, that the mode of numbering hooks, in order to distinguish their size, is entirely different in each of the above-named towns.* At Kendal the smallest-sized hook is numbered 00 (double nought), and the largest No. 12. At Redditch, on the contrary, the smallest-sized hook is numbered 12, and the largest, 00, or two noughts. Consequently, Kendal hooks marked 00, 0, 1, 2, 3, and so on, will correspond to Redditch hooks marked 12, 11, 10, 9, 8, and so on for the other numbers. The following table will exactly show how they correspond :

	Small sized.	Large sized.
KENDAL:	00, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.	
REDDITCH:	12, 11, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0, 00.	

Should you use Kendal hooks, the best size for the Dove, in the hot months, is No. 1, (we should recommend No. 0, but, on account of the shortness of the shank, it will be found too small); and No. 2 in the spring months, and when the water is at its average fulness: No. 3 is to be used when there is what is termed a “flush” of water. All Kendal hooks

* Fish-hooks are generally numbered from 1 to 12: No. 1 being the largest, and No. 12 the smallest in the series. There are, however, hooks larger than No. 1. and smaller than No. 12.

for flies should not be straight and round-bent, but, on the contrary, they should be what is called “sneck-bent.” The same direction refers to every sort of hook for fly-fishing. They should be as light in the wire as possible, to prevent the fly from falling heavily on, and from sinking in, the water.

The Redditch hooks are longer in the shank than the Kendal, and, therefore, you may use No. 11 for the hot months, and No. 10 for all the other months of the year — we mean for those months in which the river is rather full.

The diversity of opinion respecting the shape and quality of fly-hooks is so great, that we feel bound to state the conflicting judgment of some of the best authorities. Sir H. Davy says, “What a fool I was (a fish had just broken a hook) ever to use one of these London or Birmingham made hooks! — The thing has happened to me often. I now never use any hooks for salmon-fishing, except those which I am sure have been made by O’Shaughnessy, of Limerick; for even the hooks made in Dublin, though they seldom break, yet they now and then bend, and the English hooks, made of cast-steel, in imitation of Irish ones, are the worst of all.”

Mr. Alfred Ronalds says, “The Kirby hook is frequently preferred. The Limerick is also

a good hook for large flies, as at present made by O'Shaughnessy, of Limerick. His is not too proud in the barb, and is, generally, properly tapered. The Carlisle hook may also rank amongst the good ones."

Mr. Taylor, who is quite at variance with us respecting the shape of hooks—he preferring those which are straight, and we those that are crooked in the bend—says, "Your choice of hooks should be those made of the best-tempered fine steel wire; generally longish in the shank, and strong, and rather deepish in the bend; the point fine and straight, and as true as it can be set, to be level with the shank, which, for fly-making, should be tapered off to the end of it, that the fly may be finished the neater; be careful also that the hook has a good barb. I have, by many years' experience, found these kinds of hooks to be more sure, and better than any crooked hooks whatever; they do not make so large an orifice when you hook a fish, nor are they so liable to break the hold through, as the crooked-bent ones are; and in trying them for several seasons one against another, I found that I missed, in the rising or biting at bottom, considerably more fish, and lost more after being hooked with the crooked ones, than with those I have here described,

and which, of course, I now always use. The best of the kind are made at Limerick, in Ireland."

Mr. P. Fisher, author of "The Angler's Souvenir," says, in his usual off-hand style, "By whatever name hooks may be called—Limerick, Kendal, Carlisle, or Kirby—and whatever may be the pretended excellence of this or that particular bend, the great object is, to obtain them well made, neither so soft as to draw out almost straight, like a piece of pin-wire, nor so brittle as to snap on receiving a slight jerk. Before trying them, they ought to be tested; the smaller ones by pulling them with the fingers, and the larger ones by a smart pull when suspended over a wooden peg. The pretended advantages of one kind of bend over another, for hooking and holding fish, remain yet to be confirmed by experience. If the hook be, in other respects, well made, with a fine point and barb, the angler need not be particular about the bend."

Professor Rennie remarks, "It is reported, that the German Prince Rupert, well known for his experimental skill, in the reign of our Charles I., communicated to Charles Kirby a method of tempering hooks, which remained for that time a secret with Kirby's descendants, and even now, the Kirby hooks are

esteemed. Neither the London, the Birmingham, nor the Dublin hooks are good, because they are manufactured to sell cheap. Kendal hooks are in considerable reputation as to temper, and hold well, though they are not so readily fixed, by the pull, in the mouth of the fish. ‘Many anglers,’ says Carroll, ‘do not approve of the Kirby bend, particularly in large hooks: they prefer the hook that is bent in a line with the shank, as being the best for holding a large fish.’ A hook ought never to be chosen whose point stands much outwards, as it often only scratches the fish without laying hold. The celebrated Limerick hooks made by O’Shaughnessy, are by far the best tempered of any in the market, being capable of holding a fish of thirty pounds, stand a very little outwards, which is certainly an advantage.”

Mr. Stoddart says, that “the hook used in Scotland, and which he prefers, is Kendal circular bend. It is of much lighter make than the Limerick, and its shape in the smaller sizes more suitable for hooking trout.”

Colonel Hawker, on the other hand, observes, “With regard to hooks, I have always found the Irish ones far superior to ours. The best, I believe, are bought in Limerick.”

Our readers will perceive, that of the seven

authorities cited, there are five decidedly in favour of the Limerick hooks; namely, Sir H. Davy, Mr. Taylor, Professor Rennie, Mr. Ronalds, and Colonel Hawker. Notwithstanding the weight of so many great authorities against us, we still maintain the superiority of the Kendal hook over the Limerick. It is equally as well tempered, far lighter, and, if sneck-bent, it has two advantages over the Limerick hook. We have invariably remarked, that the old anglers, and particularly the most noted poachers, in the neighbourhood of Ashborne, will never buy any but crooked-bent hooks, or those that are, as they say, “skewed” in the bend. This observation is made, in order that it may be placed in juxta-position with the very confident assertion of Mr. Taylor, who says, that straight-bent hooks are the best.

If the reader choose to make his own hooks, he will follow the following method. It is extracted from Professor Rennie’s “Alphabet of Scientific Angling,” in which the learned professor has done little more than paraphrase, without acknowledgment, the directions of Sir H. Davy on this subject:—“The soft steel for making hooks is made by cementing with charcoal good soft malleable iron, such as is procured from the nails of old horse-shoes, till it is converted into steel. It is then formed

into bars, or small rods, of a thickness varying according to the size of the hooks intended to be made. The bars for the fine hooks are a little flattened; those for the larger sorts are cut into lengths of from three to four inches, sufficient for two hooks, and are then in the form of a double-pointed spear. The artist requires a hammer, a knife, a pair of pincers, an iron semi-cleam, two files, one finer than the other, a wrest, a bender, long and short tongs, and an anvil. Let the rod be heated in a charcoal fire, when the barb or witter may be raised with the knife, taking care not to cut too deep. The point is then, after cooling, sharpened by filing it on a piece of hard wood, with a dent to receive the bar. The shank is next thinned, flattened, the upper part made square, and the whole worked off with the polishing-file. Again let it be put in the fire, and bent by a turn of the wrest round circular pincers. It is now cut from the bar, put into the fire a third time, and brought to a slight red heat, and, taking it out suddenly, it is plunged into cold water. The temper is given by placing it on an iron heated in the same fire till it becomes bright blue, and while still hot it is surrounded with candle-grease, which gives it a black colour. This completes the process."

Reel: — We have seen several inventions intended as improvements of the ordinary multiplying-reel, but we do not by any means deem them such. We have heard Chesterman's self-winding reel much commended, but we can see only one advantage in it, namely, that it winds up with great speed; but, then, an insuperable objection to it is, that there is a difficulty in modifying that speed, according to will; and that, consequently, in playing a fish, you have not free power over its mechanism. Besides, its construction is heavy and over-complicated. A common reel, which multiplies four times,* is the sort-of-one we use, and we find that it possesses all the requisites necessary in such an apparatus. It possesses the power of winding up the line rapidly, is sufficiently small and light, and is not liable to be easily deranged. We recommend a mo-

* Mr. Bainbridge urges strong objections to the multiplying-reel, the chief one of which is, "that the power of the wheels, as now arranged, is inadequate to move a comparatively small weight at a trifling distance;" and he adds that, "on the other hand, the common plain pillar-reels bear an even and steady pull upon the extreme weight; and though more tedious, they are more to be depended upon for certainty and security." In our adolescence, when on account of the many claims on our meagre purse, we were constantly "hard up" for cash, and could not afford to purchase a multiplying-reel, we contented ourselves with a common pillar-reel — an old heir-loom — and, to say the truth, we do not recollect any instance in which we had to complain of its defects.

derate-sized reel of this sort, capable of holding twenty-five yards of line, and the wheels and cogs of which are made of iron or steel in preference to brass, which latter metal is too liable to break at the points of the cogs. The reel must be a stop one, and if the works of it be well finished, as those of the London reels generally are, the angler need not trouble himself about any newer invention. It makes very little difference whether it be fitted to the rod by means of a plate or screwed on; but as modern rods are for the most part made with a brass hoop or slide, to receive the plate-reel, perhaps it is the preferable one. Moreover, the plate-reel will fit every rod that has got a slide to it, and is more easily put on and taken off. The reel is to be placed about four inches from the but-end of the rod, underneath it,* with the line passing directly straight from it through the rings, which, of course, will be also underneath the rod. The rod is to be

* On the question involving the best manner of placing the reel, the Authors of this work, for the first time, differ. W. S. maintains, that the reel should be placed *under* the rod, with its handle on the left side, and his opinion is supported by the practice of almost all English anglers. On the contrary, E. F. G. contends, that the reel should be placed *upon* and *above* the rod, about a foot from the but-end, with its handle towards the right, and that the rod should be held in the right hand immediately below the reel, with the right thumb firmly resting on the upper bar of the reel. This is the Irish method.

grasped in the right hand, an inch or two above the reel towards the top. This is the mode generally adopted by the anglers of the midland counties.

Colonel Hawker is the only authority we mean to quote on the subject of placing on reels. He says, "Put on your reel with a plate and wax-end, fifteen inches from the bottom; and handle your rod close below it, keeping the reel uppermost, as the line then lies *on*, instead of *under*, your rod, and is, therefore, *less likely to strain the top* between the rings. The closer the rings are put together on the top, the less chance, of course, you have of straining or breaking it between them. Use a multiplying click-reel, without a stop; and, by not confining it with the hand while throwing, you are sure never to break your rod or line, by happening to raise it suddenly, at the moment you have hooked a large fish or weed. Let your reel be full large in proportion to the quantity of line; or it will not always go pleasantly with it in winding up."

Landing-net:—Many a fish is lost, and much trouble and anxiety incurred, in consequence of the fly-fisher contemning the use of the landing-net. Whether he be alone or accompanied, such an implement is necessary,

particularly where the banks of the stream are high, and gently shelving strands rare. Besides, the handle of it is extremely useful in wading, as it serves for a prop to steady yourself on the stones and gravel, and as a sort of sound to measure the depth of water, as you proceed along. The handle should be made of strong and light wood, and consist of different pieces screwing into one another, or it may be made telescope fashion, so as to allow you to lengthen and shorten it at pleasure. The but-end should be adapted for the insertion, by means of a screw, of a double sort of spike, consisting of a strong, flat, and pointed blade, of about five inches long, and of a small stout crook, sharpened on the inside like a hedger's bill-hook. This last adjunct will be found useful in hooking and cutting off branches of trees and other impediments in which the line may happen to get fastened. The handle should be about five feet and a half—rather longer than shorter than this length—and the hoop round which the mouth of the net is placed, should form at least a circle of fourteen inches in diameter. Landing-net hoops should be made as light as possible, and should each consist of four pieces of brass rod, stiffly jointed together, so as to form a perfectly round circle

when extended, and to fold up in a portable compass when detached from the handle.

Clearing-ring: — Must be a heavy brass circular ring, the diameter of which should be two inches and a half, and which should open and shut by means of a spring clasp. When your line gets hooked, the clearing-ring, to which is attached a few yards of thin strong whip-cord, is unclasped, then fastened round the line, and allowed to slip down on the substance in which your hook is fast. By pulling the whip-cord line with a force proportioned to the resistance offered, you either disengage your hook, or pull on shore the substance in which you got foul. The clearing-ring is so useful an appendage to the angler, that we advise him never to fish without it.

Fishing-basket or Creel: — On this subject, gentle reader, we have scarcely one word of advice to give. Your own taste will direct you to choose a neat osier one, and your own judgment must modify its capaciousness. But be the pannier, that you buckle over your shoulders, of small, or moderate, or large dimensions, we fervently hope that on every return from the river side, you need not be ashamed of allowing the hand of curiosity to lift up its lid, or

the eye of inquiry to peer into its contents. May it ever be, brother craftsman, as is this glass of Ashborne ale,* which on this cold snowy evening of February, as we are finishing this dry chapter of detail, we cordially quaff to your health and success—a brimming bumper!

“VIATOR:—Believe me, you have good ale in the Morelands, far better than that at Ashborne.

“PISCATOR:—That it may soon be! for Ashborne has (which is a kind of riddle) always in it, the best malt and the worst ale in England.” *Cotton.*

Professor Rennie, in a note on this passage, says, “This seems to be something contradictory to what is formerly stated. A friend informs me, that at this time Ashborne ale is quite famous in the northern and inland counties.”

The information of Mr. Rennie’s friend is perfectly correct. The ale to be had at the different “hosteleries” of Ashborne is equal, if not superior, in colour, strength, flavour, and purity, to any ale of any town in the kingdom. The famous ale of our favourite old town of Nottingham does not surpass it. E. F. G.

CHAPTER V.

ON THROWING THE LINE; HOOKING, PLAYING,
LANDING, AND KILLING A FISH.

THE different operations, which we are about to describe in this chapter, are, to the fly-fisher, of the very last importance. You may have the best rod and tackle that ever appeared on the banks of the Dove, and you may have "toleration" to fish in the most closely-preserved parts of that lovely stream — in those parts of it which are absolutely alive with trout and grayling — but if you do not know how to throw, cast, or fling a line in the manner of an artist, you will not be able to make a single fin show itself above the surface of the water. "He throws a fly as well as any man in England," is a common eulogistic expression, as if perfection in that single operation was a guarantee that the adept was equally skilled in every thing that pertains to his art. It is tantamount to saying, he is the best fly-fisher in England. We shall,

with our usual earnestness to convey practical instruction to our gentle readers, be as plain and precise on this subject as possible; first stating our own method of throwing a line, and then extracting the pith and marrow of the information communicated by the best authorities on this nearly all-absorbing matter.

Throwing the Line: — We recommend the beginner, when learning how to throw a line, to use a small and rather stiff rod, of the length of eleven feet. Let him commence, having the wind on his back, with about six yards of line out — using the reel-line, and not the casting-line, until he can fling with some little ease and precision — and let him throw at a mark in the water, such as the head of a pile or small rock. The process of throwing the line is performed by the wrist and elbow joints, and requires no effort from the other parts of the body. The rod, grasped tightly in the right hand a few inches above the but-end, is sent back by a sharp impulsion or jerk of the wrist backwards toward the shoulder, and the motion is stopped by the play of the elbow joint being arrested by the meeting of the muscles in the fleshy or rather muscular parts of the lower and upper bones of the arm. When this stoppage takes place, the rod is bent backwards with

sufficient sweep or swing to extend to the utmost the line in the same backward direction, and then the rod must be returned with a jerk of the wrist forwards, when the line will be also returned, and fall upon the water. In making the throw forwards, and aiming at any particular spot of the river, just as your line comes about a yard above it, suddenly check the impulsion given by the wrist to the rod, and the descent of your line will be suspended for an instant, after which it will by its own weight floatingly fall over the spot to which you directed it. This last operation is to be particularly attended to, for if performed properly the line will fall gossamer-like on the water, and your flies will not ruffle the surface of the water more than the descent of so many living natural flies would.

When the learner can throw the reel-line tolerably well, and when he has lost all fear of breaking his rod or cracking his line by the operation of casting, let him use a gut casting-line, of about two yards in length, with a rather large tail-fly attached to it. After he finds that he can use this tackle safely, he may lengthen his casting-line half a yard more, and, placing on it, in addition to the tail-fly or stretcher, two droppers at the distance pointed out in a previous chapter, commence fishing

in reality. The motion of the wrist and elbow is not oblique, but fairly straight backwards and forwards; and if a circular motion be given to them, it should be slightly from left to right, which will often give, if used gently and easily, a circular and safe sweep to the casting-line. The operation of throwing should not be performed suddenly or swiftly, but with a certain suppleness in the play of the joints that will insure to your rod and line a safe and sufficient bend and sweep.

We recommend the beginner never to endeavour to cast a line against the wind. It is an extremely difficult and dangerous operation, and can only be performed by an old practitioner, and even by him, not satisfactorily unless he use a stiff rod and a hair reel-line. Besides, the acquisition is not of vital importance, as every fly-fisher will choose to take that side of the river from which the wind blows, and it is only in consequence of a sudden winding of the river, that the wind is brought to blow in his teeth. When this happens, you must not try to throw in the eye of the wind, but cast obliquely right or left, according to the nature of circumstances. It is not difficult to throw against the wind when it blows on your left, but when it blows on your right, and you desire to fish against it, you must sweep your rod over your

but continue for half an hour fishing elsewhere; then come back, and it is very probable that you will hook him at the very first cast. By adhering to this practice we have been successful times out of mind. It is useless to remain a quarter of an hour flinging over the same fish, as by showing him your flies too often you lose the chance of catching him by-and-by, when a seeming neglect, as is often the case with other animals, will succeed in alluring him.* When you are obliged to fish at a considerable distance, it will be impossible for you to prevent some portion of the reel-line falling on the water, but lift it off as speedily as you can, by elevating your rod to a sufficient height. In all cases, and in all weathers, fish as far from the river-side as the nature of the bank and river will permit.

Mr. Alfred Ronalds, whose precepts are generally scientific, says, "In order to acquire the art of throwing a fly, it may be advisable to practise previously to visiting the stream, in an open space free from trees, where a piece of paper may represent the spot required to be

* "If you have a rise, but fail to hook your game, either by striking prematurely, or from the fish having missed his spring, you may throw over him again almost directly, if he be a small one; but, if it be 'the monarch of the brook,' don't venture near the spot again for half an hour at least." *Hansard*.

thrown to. Taking the wind in his back, the tyro, with a short line at first, may attempt to cast within an inch or two of the paper, and afterwards by degrees lengthen his line as his improvement proceeds; he may then try to throw in such a direction, that the wind may in some measure oppose the line and rod; and, lastly, he may practise throwing against the wind. In this way any person may become an adept in throwing a fly, much sooner than by trusting solely to the experience which he may get when on the water-side; for his attention being then wholly engrossed by the hopes of a rise, &c. a bad habit may be very easily engendered, which will not be as easily got rid of. He should endeavour to impart to the line a good uniform sweep or curve round the head; for if it returns too quickly or sharply from behind him, a crack will be heard, and the fly whipped off. There is some little difficulty in acquiring this management. The larger the fly the more resistance it meets with in the air; this resistance causes it to make a better curve, and the danger of smacking it off is lessened. A palmer is not easily lost in this manner. The attempt to describe by words *all* the precautions and manipulations necessary for throwing a fly successfully and gracefully, would be as hopeless a task as that of teaching

to dance by such means. It must be abundantly evident, that the fly should drop as lightly as possible on the water, and that an awkward unmannerly *splash* will inevitably mar the delusion."

Professor Rennie observes, "As considerable art is required in throwing the line, so as to make the flies fall lightly on the water, and not scare the fish, I would recommend a beginner to observe some good fly-fisher, and then practise as nearly as he can, after him, at first in a purling stream or rapid current, till he can cast dexterously in stiller water. It is useful, also, to commence with a short line, increasing it by degrees, for it is impossible for a beginner to throw eighteen yards at first, and he cannot consider himself out of his apprenticeship, till he can throw twelve or fifteen yards without cracking off his flies, or entangling his tackle."

Mr. Carroll, in his Angler's Vade Mecum, gives the following directions:—"In casting your line and flies, observe to make the semi-circle with your rod, in order to avoid snapping your flies; and after you have made your cast, raise the point of your rod to prevent too much of your line from falling into the water; properly, no more should fall than what your flies are attached to. Manage so as to let

your flies drop lightly on the water, which, with a little well-directed practice, you will soon attain. Begin to fish at the head of a stream, and use caution, for there, generally, the best game lies, particularly when there are flies coming down the river. When you cast your flies across the stream, keep them in gentle motion, to prevent the trouts from perceiving the cheat; if you give them too long a time they discover it, or if they take it, when they perceive the fraud, they quickly disengage themselves. If it is a slow-running water, let your flies sink a little, as you draw them towards you."

Mr. Cotton justly observes, "To fish fine and far off is the first and principal rule for trout angling In casting your line, do it always before you, and so that your fly may first fall upon the water, and as little of your line with it as possible: though if the wind be stiff, you will then, of necessity, be compelled to drown a good part of your line, to keep your fly in the water. And, in casting your fly, you must aim at the farther or nearer bank, as the wind serves your turn, which also will be with, and against you, on the same side, several times in an hour, as the river winds in its course, and you will be forced to angle up and down by turns accordingly; but are to endea-

vour, as much as you can, to have the wind evermore on your back. And always be sure to stand as far off the bank as the length will give you leave, when you throw to the contrary side ; though, when the wind will not permit you so to do, and that you are constrained to angle on the same side whereon you stand, you must then stand on the very brink of the river, and cast your fly at the utmost length of your rod and line, up or down the river, as the gale serves."

Mr. John Sidney Hawkins says, "Till you are a proficient, every throw will go near to cost you a hook ; therefore, practise for some time without one."

Mr. Taylor's observations show that he understood the matter in question well. He directs, "Let out the line about half as long again as the rod ; and holding that (the rod) properly in one hand, and the line near to the fly (the stretcher) in the other, give your rod a motion from right to left, and as you move the rod backwards, in order to throw out the line, let go the line out of your hand at the same time, and try several throws at this length ; then let out more line, and try that, still using more and more, till you can manage any length needful ; but about nine yards is quite sufficient for any one to practise with ; and

observe, that in raising your line, in order to throw it in again, you should wave your rod a little round your head, and not bring it directly backwards; nor must you return the line too soon, nor until it has gone its length behind you, or you will certainly whip off your end-fly. There is a great art in making your line fall light on the water, and showing the flies well to the fish. The best way I can direct is, that when you have thrown out your line, contriving to let it and the flies fall as lightly and naturally as possible, you should raise your rod gently and by degrees (sometimes with a kind of gentle trembling hand, as it were), which will bring the flies on a little towards you, still letting them go down with the stream; but never draw them against it, for it is unnatural; and before the line comes too near you, throw out again. When you see a fish rise at the natural fly, throw out about a yard above him, but not directly over his head, and let your fly or flies move gently towards him, which will show it him in more natural form, and will tempt him more to take it. Experience and observation alone, however, can make an angler a complete adept in the art, so as to be able to throw his fly behind bushes and trees, into holes, under

banks, and other places, and where in general the best fish are found.”

Colonel Hawker gives the following recommendations: — “In throwing a fly, raise the arm well up, without labouring with your body. Send the fly both backwards and forwards by a sudden spring of the wrist. Do not draw the fly too near, or you lose your purchase for sending it back, and, therefore, require an extra sweep in the air before you can get it into play again. If, after sending it back, you make the counter-spring a moment too soon, you will whip off your tail-fly, and if a moment too late your line will fall in a slovenly manner. The knack of catching this time is, therefore, the whole art of throwing well. The motion should be just sufficiently circular to avoid this; but if too circular, the spring receives too much check, and the gut will then most probably not drop before the line. In a word, allow the line no more than just time to unfold, before you repeat the spring of the wrist. This must be done, or you will hear a crack, and find that you have whipped off your tail-fly. For this reason, I should recommend beginners to learn at first with only a bob; or they will soon empty their own, or their friends’ fishing-book. And, at all events, to begin learning with a moderate length of line. . . . Sometimes

the wind blows very strong, directly across you from the right Throwing with the left hand is then a convenience ; but for those who are not able to do this, I can suggest no better make-shift, than to raise the rod over the left shoulder, and throw the line by a motion similar to that used with a whip, when lightly hitting a leader on the near side. Avoid, if you can, going too close to the edge of the water. Throw, if you are *au fait* enough to do it well, rather for the fly to become for a moment suspended *across* the wind, than directly down the wind ; as it then falls still lighter, and from this circumstance is, of course, more likely to deceive a large fish. Prefer dropping the fly just under a bush or in an eddy, to the open river ; because your line is then more obscured from the light, and the largest fish generally monopolize the possession of such places, in order to find and devour the more flies and insects ; and also to be near their places of security. If the spot is quite calm, watch the first good fish that rises, avail yourself immediately of the ripple that has been made by the fish himself, and drop in your fly a little above where he last rose. Never let your line lie too long, as, by so doing, you either expose your tackle to the fish by leaving it stationary, or draw the line in so close, that you lose both the

power of striking your fish if he rises, and that of getting a good sweep for your next throw."

A very ancient author, whose name we cannot learn, says, "Be sure in casting, that your flie fall first into the water; if the line fall first, it scareth the fish; therefore, draw it back, and cast again, that the flie may fall first. When you angle in slow rivers, or still places, with the artificial flie, cast your flie over cross the river, and let it sink a little in the water, and draw him gently back again, so as you break not the water, or raise any circles or motion in the water, and let the current of the river carry the flie gently down with the stream; and this way I have found the best sport in slow muddy rivers with the artificial flie."

Hooking or Striking a Fish: — The moment you see or feel a fish rise at you — the moment that you perceive, either by sight, touch, or hearing, that you have a rise — strike instantaneously, or at longest within half a second's pause, but strike very gently. The motion necessary for a successful strike, is performed by chucking the wrist rather sharply backwards, and slightly outwards towards the right. This operation is an extremely delicate one; and if performed too hastily and with too much force, you will almost invariably fail in hooking

your fish. It is better that you should strike rather too slowly and too feebly, than err in the contrary extreme; for there is frequently a chance of the fish hooking himself. Never fail, however, when you have a rise, to strike some way or other, and reject, by all means, the advice of those who recommend waiting till the fish has hooked himself. Such advice is extremely unsound; for if you allow the fish time to examine in the inside of his mouth — no matter whether the examination undergoes the test of feeling or of taste — he will assuredly discover, and that speedily, that he has not taken in a natural bait, and he will as speedily reject or disgorge your lure. Thousands of fish are lost by relying on the probability, that a fish may hook himself. Cautioning the reader to observe a proper medium time and force in striking, we counsel him, whenever he can, to strike in an oblique direction, for the most part slantingly towards the right, as the operation of striking is performed in that direction with more ease than in any other.

On this subject Mr. Ronalds says, that “striking a fish is a knack, which knack, like all others, is acquired only by practice; it must be done by a very sudden, but not a very strong stroke — a twitch of the wrist.”

Playing a Fish : — When you have hooked* a fish, you may tell by his motions whether you have hooked him firmly or not. If hooked firmly he will rarely, unless you force him to it, put forth his struggles on the surface of the water, but will dart downwards, if he be allowed, and make his strongest efforts to get away in mid-water or nearer to the bottom. If slightly hooked, his tumbling to get free will be performed on the top of the water: you must calculate your mode of playing him according

* “ In striking a fish that rises at the fly, some skill is required not to lose the fish or break the line, and this must be regulated by what appears to be the size of the fish; for if small, it may be at once swung out on the bank, which is the most successful way in par-fishing; while the attempt to do this with the trout, of any size, would be vain. When a fish, on being hooked, descends beneath the surface, and struggles below in the deep water,† it may be safely inferred, that he is securely hooked; whereas, when he flounders on the surface, and tries to leap out of the water, the hook is seldom very deep. With larger trout, the rod should be kept bent, so as to prevent him from running to the end of the line. The strength of the line or rod should never be trusted to, without the assistance of a landing-net. When the angler is in the midst of the stream, if from the moment the trout is struck, it is prevented from re-descending in such a manner, that the upper part of its head and eyes are retained above, or on a level with the surface, it will, for the space of a good many seconds, be so much astonished, as to be incapable of any active exertions, and will frequently allow itself to be drawn in that position, and without resistance, straight ashore.” *Professor Rennie*.

† This is also a sign that the fish is a large one.

to those two circumstances. If he be lightly hooked it will require great art to land him; you must be as gentle as a lamb, coaxing him, rather than forcing him; and you must be ever ready to give him line when he struggles. Employ no violence, and even when by gentle manœuvring you have fairly tired him out, guide him, rather than drag him, towards your landing-net. When you have hooked a fish solidly — and this we take to be the case on which to give general instructions for playing a fish — if he be a tolerably large one, and if the river be fair and free from obstructions, do not endeavour, as some authors erroneously advise, to make your fish show his head above the water. On the contrary, yield to him by giving him line gradually, and let him go, if he choose to take that direction, down current and at mid-water. Be sure, however, that in giving him line you do not allow him to slacken his hold, and take particular care that you constantly feel your fish, which you may always do by holding your rod nearly perpendicular, giving, as it is called, the but-end to him. Never be afraid of giving your fish too much line, provided you feel him, and can keep him from the bottom; for there is nothing that more speedily exhausts a fish, than to have to drag a long length of line after him. This was the

invariable practice of our father, and we never knew him to lose a fish by adopting it. We have seen him kill very large fish in this way, rejecting the advice of lookers-on, who urged rapid winding-up, and bearing strongly on the fish; and we have observed him, notwithstanding the many advisers against him, give the fish line with a confidence that would have been jeered at as conceited and obstinate presumption, had it not been justified by success.

Playing a fish with fair length of line, takes the stress off the weaker portions of your tackle and rod, and distributes it in proportion equal to the strength of the different parts of them. Whilst in the act of playing a fish, avoid sinking the upper part of your rod too low, for if you do you will lose nearly all power over him; and he will dart towards the bottom, giving you a world of anxiety and trouble to raise him to the surface or to mid-water again. Ever keep your fish "under buckle," which means, never if you can lose your hold of him, which is done, as we said before, by presenting the but slightly towards the fish.* As soon as

* "When a fish is hooked in the upper part of the mouth, by the strength of the rod applied as a lever to the line, it is scarcely possible for him to open the gills as long as this force is exerted, particularly when he is moving in a rapid stream; and when he is hooked in the lower jaw, his mouth is kept closed by the same application of the

the fish has made half a dozen strong turns or efforts to disengage himself, you should begin to wind up gradually, and direct him towards shore. If, however, afterwards he continue, ever and anon, to make a dash to get free, give him line every time he does, and do not make up your mind to land him until you perceive him completely fagged. Allow your fish to run with the stream. Playing a fish against stream is the worst practice possible; for if you do, you can scarcely calculate the great additional weight you throw upon your tackle; and, moreover, there are many chances, that the force of the resistance you in such a case meet with will tear away the fish from your hook. This precept you may see particularly illustrated, if you endeavour to spin a minnow against the current of a rapid stream. Even the resistance offered to so small a fish will be frequently sufficient to tear it from off the hook. The circumstances under which it will be peremp-

strength of the rod; so that he is much in the same state as that of a deer caught round the neck by the lasso of a South-American peon, who gallops forwards, dragging his victim after him, which is killed by strangulation in a very short time. When fishes are hooked foul, that is, on the outside of the body, as in the fins or tail, they will often fight for many hours, and in such cases are seldom caught, as they retain their powers of breathing unimpaired; and if they do not exhaust themselves by violent muscular efforts, they may bid defiance to the temper and the skill of the fisherman." *Salmonia.*

torily necessary for you to wind up your reel-line with velocity are, when there is danger, if you allow the fish great length of line, of getting foul of trees, or other obstructions, or when you see that he darts off to get among weeds or under the roots of bushes. Rapidity in winding up, is particularly to be observed when the fish strikes towards you, to get under the trees or bank on the side from which you are fishing. You must, besides winding up rapidly, hold your rod with the but-end advanced over the river as far as your arm can extend.* Having exhausted your fish, your own good sense will direct you to choose the most convenient place for landing him, namely, where the bank is most level with the water, and where you can draw the fish ashore without lifting him from off the water.

Landing a Fish: — Whenever you fish a stream, in which you are likely to catch fish above a half-pound weight, take with you, without fail, a landing-net. We know that young anglers feel a sort of contempt for this

* “Let me tell you, my friend, you should never allow a fish to run to the weeds, or to strike across the stream; you should carry him always down the stream, keeping his head high, and in the current. If in a weedy river, you allow a large fish to run up stream, you are almost sure to lose him.” *Salmonia*, page 28.

most useful piece of apparatus, and think it savours too much of formidable formality; but we, old stagers, who like to take things coolly, and leave as little as possible to chance, never fly-fish without one. If you fish alone, you must, when you have exhausted your fish, get him as near shore as possible, taking care, however, not to wind him up so tightly as that he will hang suspended above, or partly out of, the water; but allow him simply to be near the surface of the water. Put the stop on your reel; force firmly the spike of your but, with its point in a slanting direction towards the fish, into the ground, and sinking your net at some distance from the fish in the water, bring it under him from behind. Never come yourself, or place your net, in face of a fish. When you are accompanied by a person who is to use the landing-net, let that person keep in a line with you, and never go before you. Your fish being ready to be landed, your companion or servant must come between you and the river, always taking care to be near to and in a line with you; and slowly sinking the net in the water, he must pass it tail-wise under the fish. There is no earthly thing that frightens a fish so much as the sight of a landing-net, or of a person appearing in front of him for the purpose of landing

him. Such a sight arouses his seemingly worn-out energies, and the moment he perceives it, he dashes off, with all the desperate vigour of a death-and-life struggle. The energy of this lunge of despair, if it do not break your tackle, or free your quarry, will, at all events, cause you much additional trouble. The fish being fairly in the net, the person holding it should not rudely throw the fish or net on the bank, but present them to you, in order that you may speedily take the fish from off the hook, and undo any tangles that may be in your line or flies. Expedition in this last point is important, especially when fish are upon the rise, and when "Time is to be taken by the fore-lock." Never take hold, nor let any else take hold, of your line while landing a fish.

Killing your Fish : — If your fish be of small or middling size, kill them immediately by hitting them with a little hammer on the back of the neck, or by striking that part, holding the fish by the tail, once or twice sharply against the but-end of the rod. If the fish be large, it will be advisable to crimp him.*

* "Crimping, by preventing the irritability of the fibre from being gradually exhausted, seems to preserve it so hard and crisp, that it breaks under the teeth ; and a fresh fish not crimped is generally tough." *Salmonia*, page 98.

We shall conclude this chapter, by giving two or three extracts taken from standard authorities. They refer chiefly to playing and landing a fish.

Mr. Ronalds recommends, that "having hooked a fish, the rod should be carefully retained in that position which will allow its greatest pliability to be exerted. For beginners to do this, it may be advisable that they should get it up over the shoulder, and present the but-end towards the fish. A gentle pull must now be kept upon the fish, and he should be led down the stream rather than up, making use of the reel as occasion may require, to shorten the line. But if he runs in towards the bank upon which the fisherman stands, it will be necessary for him to approach the edge of the water as nearly as possible, holding the rod with an outstretched arm in almost an horizontal position; and if the reel is of the usual bad construction, it will be also necessary to pull in the line as quickly as possible with the left hand, this may prevent the fish from reaching his harbour; if it should not, he will most likely twist the gut round roots, &c., and break away. To kill him, the nose must be kept up as much as possible; should he be very importunate and resolute, he may be lent a little more line now and then, but it must be promptly retaken with tre-

mendous interest, and got up as short as possible. After various fruitless efforts to escape, which exhaust his strength, the nose may be got fairly out of the water, he may be towed gently to the side, and the landing-net passed under him. From the time of hooking the fish, if a large one, to the time of landing, care must be had, that the line shall not be touched by the hand, excepting under the just-mentioned circumstances; all should depend upon the pliability of the rod. In case a landing-net should not be at hand, the reel may be stopped from running back, the rod stuck up in the ground by the spike, and, both hands being disengaged, the fisherman may stoop down and grasp him firmly behind the gills."

Colonel Hawker says, "A small fish is, of course, not even worth the wear and tear of a reel. But if you happen to hook a good one, wind up immediately; and the moment you have got him under command of a short line, hold your rod well on the bend, with just purchase enough to keep him from going under a weed, or rubbing out your hook by boring his nose in the gravel. Observe a fish, and you will always perceive, that, after he finds he is your prisoner, he does all he can to get down, as the best means of escape. After getting your fish under the command of a short line and well-bent rod, let him run, and walk by the

side of him, keeping a delicate hold of him, with just purchase enough, as I before observed, to prevent his going down; when he strikes, ease him at the same instant; and when he becomes faint, pull him gently down stream; and, as soon as you have overpowered him, get his nose up to the top of the water; and, when he is nearly drowned, begin to tow him gently towards the shore. Never attempt to lift him out of the water by the line, but haul him on to some sloping place; then stick the spike of your rod in the ground, with the rod a little on the bend; crawl slowly up as quick as possible, and put your hands under him, and not too forward. If you use a landing-net (which, for saving time, and particularly where the banks are steep, is sometimes a necessary appendage), let it be as light as possible, very long in the handle, and three times as large as what people generally carry. Take care that neither that, nor the man who may assist you with it, goes even in sight of the water, till the fish is brought well to the surface, and fairly within reach; and then you have only to have the net put under him, or keep his eyes above water, tow him into it. Mind this, or the landing-net and your man will prove enemies, instead of assistants, to your sport. Nothing will so soon, or suddenly, rouse a sick fish, as the sight of a man or a landing-net."

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE DIFFERENT MATERIALS USED FOR
DRESSING ARTIFICIAL FLIES; AND THE
SIMPLEST, SHORTEST, AND BEST MODE OF
DRESSING OR MAKING THEM POINTED OUT.

THOUGH every writer on fly-fishing tells his readers, that it is almost impossible to teach them how to dress or tie on flies by written instructions, we think that if such instructions be plainly written, any studious and intelligent person may so fully understand them, as to be able to put them in a very short time into practice. Having attentively read the directions given by many different authors on this chief point of the art, we are obliged, though with considerable reluctance, to come to the ungenerous conclusion, that they have never practised fly-dressing themselves, or rarely seen it performed by others. We have also observed, in the course of our perusal of different treatises on fly-fishing, that the brothers of the angle have not been over nice in keeping their hands from “picking and steal-

ing;" and, what is worse than all, that they have studiously concealed the sources from which their pilferings were extracted. Authors, even of standard reputation, are liable to this charge. Best has taken from Cotton, nearly *verbatim*, the latter's instructions how to make a fly which is not a hackle or palmer-fly; and in Bowlker's Art of Angling we find that Mr. Bainbridge's list of materials, and his directions for dressing a fly, are, without acknowledgment, inserted. We could point out many serious instances of plagiarism, but for the present we content ourselves with making the general charge, hoping that authors on angling will, in future editions of their works, name the authorities to whose labours and observations they are so deeply indebted.

We beg to state, that we never fish, save now and then for comparison' sake, with any other flies except those that have been fashioned by our own fingers; and that we never use any materials but those of which we shall give a full list and description. We have no *arrière pensée*—we withhold no secret from our readers—all the arcana of the art, which hitherto we have kept to ourselves, we now, without the slightest restriction, fully divulge for the benefit of the public. We shall have to men-

tion flies, whose colours and mode of dressing were only known to ourselves, and which have killed fish by dozens, when no other flies could move a fin; and in doing so, it is not our intention to withhold any single detail necessary for the perfect formation of such flies. It is our sincere desire and anxious hope, that every reader of this book may become as practically and theoretically skilful — yea, even more so — than we are ourselves in every thing that relates to the art of fly-fishing.

Materials used in Fly-dressing: — Silk of every shade and colour is the first requisite. The colour of the silk must always exactly correspond with the colour of the body of the fly you mean to imitate. The most useful silks are those of the following colours: straw, brimstone, fawn, light and dark Esterhazy, light and dark orange, light and dark purple, dark puce, black, different shades of yellow, crimson, red, and brown. The strongest in proportion to its substance, the finest and the best silk for fly-dressing, is to be procured at Worcester, and you must ask for that sort which is used by glovers in stitching ladies' finest kid gloves. The silk of this sort, which is composed of two twists, will be found the most useful for general purposes.

Wings of Artificial Flies : — The best wings for artificial flies are to be made of the longest fibres or plumelets, stripped from the stem or shaft of the wing of the birds which we are about to name. They are to be stripped from that side of the feather, which, in its natural state, lies next to the body of the bird : — from the wings of the starling, field-fare, black-bird, red-wing, lark, hen pheasant, woodcock, land-rail, grouse, partridge, dotterel, snipe, golden-plover, and from feathers of different shades, plucked from the body, under the wing, of a mallard or common wild-drake.

Hackles or Feathers, used to imitate the Legs of Flies* : — The scarcest and best hackles are duns of all shades, particularly those which possess the clearest different shades of blue ; furnace hackles, which are of a red colour, with a black streak along the stem up the middle of the feather ; red hackles, light and dark ginger, black and grizzled hackles. Those hackles are to be got in the greatest state of perfection, from off the upper part of the necks of cocks. They should be plucked from those parts where they grow from half an inch to two inches long. When dun hackles cannot be procured from cocks, you must use those plucked from dun hens, which, though they

* And sometimes the wings.

are considered by some an efficient substitute, are, in consequence of the softness of their fibre, incapable of resisting water so well as the hackles of the male bird. The best time for plucking dun birds is, in the middle of winter; for, as Mr. Bainbridge justly remarks, "The feathers are then perfect and free from that disagreeable matter, which, at other times, is generally found in the pen part of the feather." Dun hackles, when plucked in March, and exposed to the action of the sun's heat, assume a fine yellow tinge, and become that useful feather, called the yellow dun. Whenever a dun cock — a pure dun one — falls into the hands of the fly-fisher — he should be treated as a thing beloved. The best walk at some farm-house should be selected for him, and the humanity and honesty of the persons to whom you intrust the gallant bird, should be unquestionable.

Feathers, which make excellent hackles, can be got from off the back of the grouse, from the tail of the common wren, from the breast and back of the partridge, from the outside part nearest the body of the golden plover's wing, from the inside of the snipe's wing, and from the crests of the heron and green-plover.

Dubbings : — The general name of the mate-

rial of which the bodies of artificial flies are made, is dubbing. The most commonly-used and the best sort of dubbing is, unravelled mohair, of nearly every colour, but particularly of the colour of the different sorts of silk already recommended. No material better resists the action of water, or changes colour less when immersed in it, than mohair. Good mohair is to be procured from the ends of pieces of cloth. Camlets of every colour are necessary. Also divers sorts of furs that are, or may be, dyed every colour; particularly fur from the dark part of the hare's ear, from the nape of the hare's neck, rabbit's fur variously dyed, mole's, rat's, and monkey's fur. The latter fur can be procured of divers colours even in its natural state, and, by reason of its not imbibing water easily, is one of the best sorts of furs. A rich dun dubbing is to be procured, by combing with a fine-toothed comb the back of a lead-coloured grey-hound. Hog's fur, which grows between the roots of the bristles, dyed of various colours, bear's fur, fox's fur, fur got off the belly of a hedge-hog, the light yellow fur from off the martin's neck, are all useful as dubbing. Dubbings of various hues and of excellent quality, resisting the water well, and not losing their colour when in it, are to be found in tan-yards among the hairs that fall off the

skins, and likewise among pieces of plaster that are stripped from old walls and ceilings. Lime not only changes the original colour of hair, but adds to its capability of withstanding water.

Herls: — The plumelets of that description of feather which grows in the peacock's tail, are denominated herls. They are chiefly used in the formation of the bodies of palmer-flies. The best are those found in ostrich feathers, dyed variously, and in peacock's feathers of every gradation of hue. The feathers forming the crest of the green-plover may be considered in the light of a fine black herl.

Ribbing: — For ribbing flies — chiefly palmer ones — gold and silver twist is used, and may be very easily procured from the hat-bands of livery servants. The brighter and finer the twist the better. Gold and silver tinsel is sometimes used in dressing large-bodied flies, but the best anglers in Derbyshire consider it valueless.

FLY-MAKING.

We have now, benevolent reader, pointed out to you all the materials necessary for the construction of flies. We shall proceed then,

forthwith, to teach you how to use those materials. In order to make our instructions more lucid, we will lay down eight general rules for dressing flies. Every fly, except two or three, which we shall teach how to dress in the proper place, when we come to speak of them separately, is made according to some one of the eight rules about to be laid down. We begin with those flies which are most easily made.

RULE 1.—*To make a Plain Hackle:*—Take your hook between the points of the thumb and fore-finger of your left hand. Hold it firmly by the shank, with the tip of the shank slightly projecting beyond your finger-ends, towards the right. The back of the shank is to be upwards. Take your waxed silk, holding the left point of it, as you do the hook, and whip it three times tightly round the shank of the hook, towards the end—that is, in a contrary direction to the bend. Hold down your silk, out of your way, by placing it, and holding it, between the middle and third fingers of your left hand. Then take your link of gut, with a single knot on the end, and having moistened it in your mouth, place the knotted-end parallel with the shank, and between the shank and your left fore-finger, and let the gut pass down the shank a little more than half

way towards the bend. Take your silk between the fore-finger and thumb of your right-hand, and whip it tightly round the shank and gut three times in the direction of the bend. Rest your silk as before between the middle and third fingers of your left-hand. You have now finished the first operation, namely, that of attaching the hook and gut together; and in dressing every sort of fly, bear in mind, that it is to be performed in a similar way. Now take your hackle-feather, and having stripped it of the downy fibres, on each side the stem down to its root, place it against the shank of the hook, on the side nearest your body, with its root pointing towards the bend of the hook; then, and in the same direction, whip the silk sharply three times round the hook, gut, and root-end of the feather, and cut off with a fine-pointed small scissors, any of the root that remains. Having done so, take the feather by its point between the thumb and fore-finger of the right-hand, and wind it in close laps five or six times — the number of laps to be proportioned to the size of the hook and fly — down the shank towards the bend; then make two laps of the silk over the point of the feather; cut away with your scissors what remains uncovered by the silk of the point of the feather; and, lastly, waxing your silk afresh, fasten it

with two loops, or invisible knots, just where the bend begins, or opposite to the barbed point of your hook.

It is necessary to remark here, that the chief operations performed in fly-dressing are very much facilitated, by allowing the nails of the thumbs and fore-fingers to grow long. They will then preclude the necessity of using a pliers. During the different operations your silk should be frequently waxed, and the easiest way to do so is, to take the extreme point of the silk between your teeth, the other part being round the hook held in your left-hand, and with the wax in your right-hand, rub the silk sharply up and down three or four times. At the end of this chapter we shall give a recipe — and it is an *unique* one — of the only sort of wax proper for making flies.

RULE 2. — *How to make a Palmer-fly, or Hackle, with a Body:* — Though hackles and palmer-flies are by many considered one and the same, we have made, in order to simplify our rules, a distinction between them. The distinction is merely artificial. We will suppose you about to dress the red-palmer. The first operation, namely, that of whipping your silk round the hook, and afterwards round your hook and gut, is to be performed according to

the instructions of Rule 1. Then take your hackle-feather, prepared and placed as pointed out in that rule, and lap your silk once round it and the shank; place the thick end of your herl (in making the red-palmer, it will be a peacock's herl) by the side of your hackle, and whip your silk round the herl, hackle, gut, and shank of the hook, two or three times, according to the size of your hook* and fly; then cut the thick ends of your hackle and herl off; wax your silk anew, and lap the herl five or six times — each lap close upon the other — towards the bend of the hook; hold your herl tight between the left-thumb and fore-finger, in the way you are holding the hook; then take the point of the hackle-feather in your right-hand fingers, and wrap it thickly five or six times over the herl in the direction of the bend; make two laps of your silk over all; cut away the remaining point of the hackle-feather, and then wrap your herl further on towards the bend twice round the hook, make one lap of your silk over the herl, and cut away all that remains of it. Fasten your silk — again waxing it anew — with two loop-knots near the

* No. 3 Kendal hook is the best size for palmers fished with on the Dove; you may use No. 4 or No. 5 in some of the smaller streams of Derbyshire, where larvæ and flies, on account of locality and atmosphere, are of a larger growth.

bend, and then your palmer will be ready for his pilgrimage.

RULE 3. — *How to make a Palmer, ribbed with Gold-twist* : — Suppose you are going to dress the black or golden palmer. Having completed the first operation described in our first rule, put on your red-hackle with only one lap of silk, then by the side of that fasten on your gold-twist with a single lap of silk, and then attach outside them your black-ostrich herl, with two laps of silk. Cut away the but-ends of twist, hackle, and herl, and wind the latter four or five times closely round the shank of the hook, in the direction of the bend; then take the gold-twist, and wrap it in the same direction three times round the herl; after that take your red-hackle by the point, and wind it in thick laps over all. Now withdraw, in a backward direction, towards the end of the shank, the herl and the twist that have been held, while you were winding the hackle, between the thumb and finger of the left-hand, and make fast the end of the hackle with two laps of the silk. Again take the ostrich herl, and wind it thickly three or four times round the hook towards the bend, then rib with windings of the twist to the last lap of the herl; fasten

down the herl and twist with two loop-knots of the silk, cut off their remaining ends, and fasten the whole, opposite the barb of the hook, with a single knot of the silk.

All descriptions of palmers are to be made after the manner directed in these three first rules.

RULE 4. — *How to make a Fly with Wings and simple Dubbing* : — First operation the same as before described. Having stripped a sufficient quantity of fibres, to form your wings, from the feather of the starling's wing — or from that of the wing of any bird mentioned in our list of fly-making materials — place it on the back of the shank, with the roots pointing towards the bend, and the points of the feather towards your right-hand; then lap the silk, at a short distance from the end of the shank, twice around the feathers and shank. With your right-hand thumb-nail, force upright all that part of the wing which lies to the right of the silk laps; divide equally and exactly, into two parts, on each side of the shank, your feathers, so as to make two wings of exact proportion the one with the other, in every respect; then bring your silk under that wing which is next to your body, and over it through the separation of the wings, in the

direction of your left-hand fingers ; next bring the silk round the wing on the right side of the shank, drawing it towards your left through the separated wings ; pass the silk once more, as you did in the first instance, through the wings. Now cut off the roots of the wings, and bending the points of the wings, by taking them together between your right-thumb and fore-finger, down towards the bend of the hook, and holding them down on the shank firmly in that position, lap your silk three times between the bent-down wings, and the point of the shank. This operation forms the head of the fly, and serves to keep the wings from falling back, and to retain them in an upright position. Now take your dubbing, whatever it may be—but that composed of mohair is, perhaps, the best for beginners to commence with—and laying it thinly round your silk, well waxed, spin the silk three or four times sharply round, between the thumb and fore-finger of the right-hand, which will cause the dubbing to stick round it firmly and evenly ; and then take your silk, with the dubbing spun neatly about it, and lap it close under the wings on the side next the bend, four or five times, or until you see that there is sufficient dubbing lapped round the hook to form a body of proper length and thickness. Then putting

the end of the silk between your teeth, rub the silk from the hook towards your mouth with your wax, in order to clear away the dubbing that is not wanted; and whipping your silk twice round the shank, fasten it at the bend with two loop-knots. Now examine the shape of your fly, and if you find that the dubbing lies clumsily and unproportionably round the hook, pick it out with the point of a needle when enough of it does not show, or clip it off with your scissors when you find it too long or too thick.

RULE 5. — *How to make a Grouse or a Wren's Hackle* :—Lap your hook and gut together in the usual way. Strip off the soft fibres from the quill-end of such feather as you are going to use, and, instead of placing that end to be first whipped on to the shank of the hook, as you did in dressing the simple hackle, you must fasten on to the shank the tip-end of the feather, having first made a separation in the fibres of the feather, for your silk to pass without obstruction through. This separation is made by forcing, from opposite points of each side of the stem, the fibres backwards towards the root of the feather. Whip your silk twice round the point of the feather, at the place where the fibres are separated, and then cut off

what remains, in the direction of the bend, of that point. Now take between the fore-finger and thumb of your right-hand, the thick-end stem of the feather, and warp it twice round the shank in the direction of the bend; make two laps of silk over the feather, and cut away what remains of it: fasten with two loop-knots.

RULE 6. — *Winged-fly, with Hackle for Legs*: — Whip on your silk and gut according to Rule 1, and tie on your wings according to Rule 4. Having completed these operations, strip the downy fibres off the thick-end of your hackle-feather, and fasten it close unto the wing, on the bend-side, with two laps of your silk. Cut off the thick end of the stem of the feather, and, with your right-hand, draw back towards the point all the fibres of the feather, in order to separate them distinctly, and that, when the feather is wound round the hook, the fibres may sit more regularly. Next, take the hackle in your right-hand fingers by its point, and lap it round in close laps under the front of the wing down towards the bend. Having done this, whip your silk twice round the point of the feather, and clip off that point; then fasten with three loop-knots at the bend.

RULE 7. — *Fly with Wings, Dubbing for Body, and Hackle for Legs*: — Proceed as before

directed until you have tied on your wings; then attach your hackle with a single whip of the silk; on the silk twist your dubbing, according to the directions of Rule 4; having done so, lap your dubbing close under the wings and over the stem of the hackle and hook, three times; then clear away from your silk the superfluous dubbing, using, as directed in Rule 4, your wax for that purpose. Now take your hackle by the point, and lap it over the dubbing three times; cut off what remains of the point of the hackle, after having made two whips of the silk over it, and fasten with two loop-knots.

That excellent fly — the sand-fly — is made according to this method, and the beginner will do well to put the directions of this rule into practice by endeavouring to dress so killing a fly.

RULE 8. — *Fly with Wings, Dubbing for Body, Hackle for Legs, and ribbed with Gold or Silver Twist*: — This is the most difficult sort of fly to be made. The learner will perceive, that, at least, four different materials are to be used to fashion it, and that, consequently, great delicacy of manipulation is required, in order that the shape of the fly may not be too coarse and bulky. When the learner has succeeded

in making this fly well, he may consider himself entitled to the highest honours of our angling academy. To obtain them he must execute as follows:—Having put on the wings in the usual way, he must fasten directly under them, with one lap of silk, his twist; he must fasten by the side of his twist the hackle, with one lap of silk also; he must then cut the ends of the twist and hackle away, those ends, of course, which point in the direction of the bend; then the dubbing must be placed on the silk and twisted round it, and after that twisted round the hook in sufficient quantity to form the body; over the dubbing he must lap the twist two or three times, and then both over dubbing and twist, close to the wings of the fly, let the hackle be lapped three times; he must fasten the point of the hackle with one whip of the silk, and then clip off what remains of the point of the hackle. He must now whip the silk twice or thrice towards the bend, and over that he must make two laps with the twist; he must now with a single loop-knot of the silk fasten down the twist, and cut off what remains of the twist. The whole must be fastened and finished by making two loop-knots with the silk at the bend.

The operations described in this rule are necessary to make the dun-drake, or March-

brown, one of the best — if not the very best — flies that can be fished with, in its due season, on the Dove. We advise the learner to try, as an exercise, to dress this fly.

HAVING described, as plainly and as succinctly as possible, the different modes of dressing artificial flies, we wish to point out, in a few words, the advantages of the system we adopt and recommend. Those advantages will be more fully understood, if our system be compared with the system of others. The learner will remark, that all our operations commence near the end of the shank of the hook, and terminate at the bend nearly opposite the barbed point of the hook. They possess, therefore, the inestimable advantage of never-ceasing uniformity. The reader will also remark, that the silk is wound or whipped but once along the hook, and that, in consequence, the body of the fly must be neater than if the silk, as is recommended by many authors, were whipped twice, which is nearly always done by those who commence their operations at the bend of the hook. Time is also saved by following our method. Nearly all our operations being performed from right to left, the motions of the hand necessary to perform them are, in consequence, the most natural. That the reader may have an opportunity of comparing our

mode of dressing flies, with the modes practised by others, we shall, on this head, make a few extracts from the works of those authors most in repute.

Mr. Cotton, whose directions, as we said before, have been taken and inserted, without acknowledgment, in Best's work on angling, says, "In making a fly, which is not a hackle, or palmer-fly, you are, first, to hold your hook fast betwixt the fore-finger and thumb of your left-hand, with the back of the shank upwards, and the point towards your finger's end; then take a strong small silk of the colour of the fly you intend to make, wax it well with wax of the same colour, to which end you are always, by the way, to have wax of all colours about you* and draw it betwixt your finger and thumb to the head of the shank; and then whip it twice or thrice about the bare hook, which, you must know, is done, both to prevent slipping, and also that the shank of the hook may not cut the hairs of your towght,† which sometimes it will otherwise do. Which being

* Unnecessary trouble. Your silk being already "of the colour of the fly you intend to make," wants no additional colouring. The wax, which at the end of the chapter we shall tell you how to make, being colourless and transparent, will suit silks of every colour. It neither adds to, nor takes from, their hue.

† Hair-link.

done, take your line [link of gut], and draw it likewise between your finger and thumb, holding the hook so fast, as only to suffer it to pass by, until you have the knot of your towght almost to the middle of the shank of your hook, on the inside of it; then whip your silk twice or thrice about both hook and line, as hard as the strength of the silk will permit. Which being done, strip the feather for the wings proportionable to the bigness of your fly, placing that side downwards which grew uppermost before upon the back of the hook, leaving so much only as to serve for the length of the wing of the point of the plume lying reversed from the end of the shank upwards; then whip your silk twice or thrice about the root-end of the feather close by the arming; and then whip the silk fast and firm about the hook and towght, until you come to the bend of the hook, but not farther, as you do at London, and so make a very unhandsome, and, in plain English, a very unnatural and shapeless fly.* Which being done, cut away the end of your towght and fasten it. And then take your dubbing, which is to make the body of your fly, as much as you think convenient, and holding it lightly, with your hook, betwixt

* This may have been the case in Mr. Cotton's time, but is not the case now — quite the contrary.

the finger and thumb of your left-hand, take your silk with the right, and twisting it betwixt the finger and thumb of that hand, the dubbing will spin itself about the silk, which, when it has done, whip it about the armed-hook backward, till you come to the setting on of the wings.* And then take the feather for the wings, and divide it equally into two parts; then turn them back towards the bend of the hook, the one on the one side, and the other on the other, of the shank, holding them fast in that posture, betwixt the fore-finger and thumb of your left-hand; and then take the silk betwixt the finger and thumb of your right-hand, and, where the warping ends, pinch or nip it with your thumb-nail against your finger, and strip away the remainder of your dubbing from the silk; and then, with the bare silk, whip it once or twice about; make the wings to stand in due order, fasten, and cut it off. After which, with the point of a needle,

* The learner will perceive, that Mr. Cotton proceeds in the same way as we do, as far as the setting on of the wings; but that afterwards he whips the silk along the hook as far as the bend; then he twists on his dubbing, retracing his steps towards the wings, and fastens and finishes at the point of the shank. In our method the fly is finished by the time Mr. C. begins to put on his dubbing, or before he has completed one half of his operations. Our fly will of necessity be more delicate in shape, and will be every tittle as solidly attached to the hook.

raise up the dubbing gently from the warp; twitch off the superfluous hairs of your dubbing; leave the wings of an equal length — your fly will never else swim true — and the work is done.”

All Mr. Cotton’s directions for fly-dressing are included in this extract, and they only teach how to make the easiest of winged flies — the fly with simple dubbing for body. See our fourth Rule.

We have attentively studied the directions for fly-making given by the following authors, Rennie, Hansard, Best, Ronalds, Taylor, &c. but we confess, that, to our comprehension, they appear either so complicated, or so obscure, as to prevent us from laying any portion of them before our readers. Messrs. Best and Ronalds are particularly elaborate in their instructions, how to make the different sorts of palmer-flies, but we question whether, notwithstanding their minuteness, they have succeeded in their praise-worthy intentions. Bowlker’s directions are a mere unacknowledged condensation of those of Mr. Bainbridge, but as we consider the latter gentleman the best fly-dresser that has hitherto appeared in the shape of an author, we shall copy his general directions in full, in order that the reader may compare them with ours.

Mr. Bainbridge says, "Whether a common hackle, or a dubbed winged fly, is to be manufactured, it is invariably necessary to have the whole of the materials which are to compose the imitations properly adjusted, previous to the commencement of the operation. First: The hackles stripped, or divested of the soft downy feathers which grow nearest the root, and turned back ready for twisting on the hook. Second: The gut carefully examined, and tried by moderately pulling it, in proportion to the weight expected to be held by it. This precaution will frequently save the angler much disappointment, by discovering defects not apparent to the eye. Third: The dubbing properly mixed to the exact colour of the body of the natural fly, a small proportion of which should be moistened, and held up to the light; for the camlets and furs, when wet, generally become several shades darker than when in a dry state, and in some instances assume a totally different hue. Fourth: The silk well waxed with a colour lighter than the body of the fly; and a hook cautiously tried as to temper, and prudently selected as to size. Fifth: The wings must be stripped from the feathers by an even but sudden pull. Every thing being thus in a state of readiness, the hook must be first fastened to the finest end of the gut with

waxed silk, beginning (if for a hackle-fly only) at the bend, and working towards the head of the hook ; when, within about three turns of which, the hackle must be fastened in, and the winding of the silk continued until it reaches the end of the shank. Having reached this point, it must be turned again, as if to retrace the same ground for two turns, which will form the head of the fly.

“ The dubbing, if of fur or camlet, must now be twisted round the silk, and wrapped on the hook for nearly half the proposed length of the body, when it may be fastened by a single loop, in order that both hands may be at liberty, for the better management of the hackle. If the body is to be composed of peacock or ostrich herl, it ought to be fastened on at the same time with the hackle, so that it may be perfectly secure. Should the hackle be of tolerable size, there will be no difficulty in twisting it firmly on the hook, with the fingers only ; but if small, a pair of neat pliers, which close together by a spring, will be found of great utility, in winding the turns of the hackle close under each other ; and, if pliers be wanting, a piece of silk, fastened to the end of the feather, will answer the purpose.

“ When enough of the feather is wound upon the hook, the remainder should be pressed

closely under the thumb of the left-hand, and the fibres which may be entangled picked out by means of a needle. The silk, with the dubbing, must now be twisted over the end of the hackle (with the left-thumb kept down), until the body of the fly is of the length required, taking care that it never proceeds beyond the bend of the hook, which would give it an unnatural appearance. A single loop will keep the whole together, until the dubbing be picked out, and the hackle properly arranged, when the fastening off must be effected, by making three or four loose turns of the silk, at such a distance from the hook, as to admit of the end being passed under them.

“The loose turns must then be wrapped closely on the hook, and the end drawn tight, which will so completely secure the fastening, that, if neatly managed, it will be difficult to discover where the fly has been finished. This mode of fastening is called the ‘invisible’ knot.

“In making a winged fly, the same method may be adopted with respect to whipping the hook to the gut, as far as the fastening in the hackle; after which, instead of returning immediately with the silk, in order to form the head of the fly, the wings must be fastened before the dubbing is wound. Some persons fix the wings to the hook with the root nearest

the bend, and force the points or narrow ends of the fibres back afterwards, making use of the short remains of the roots to effect the division of the wings. This method is, however, tedious, and difficult to be understood by a young practitioner.

“ The most simple mode of proceeding is, to fix the wings on the shank of the hook lengthwise, with the narrowest ends nearest the bend, fastening them by three or four turns of the silk above or nearest the head of the hook, and then cutting the root-ends close with a small pair of scissors ; after which, the silk must be brought below the wings, and the body twisted, for a short distance, as in the hackle-fly.

“ The hackle must be wound once round the hook at the head, which will conceal the ends of the cut fibres, and add greatly to the neatness of the fly. If the wings are to be divided, they may be separated equally by a needle, and the hackle brought down between them, and wound again round the hook four turns below, where the silk will be found in readiness to fasten it.”

These directions are entirely opposed to ours. Bainbridge tells the learner to begin “ at the bend, and work towards the head of the hook ;” and we tell the learner to begin at the head of the hook, or near the end of the shank, and to work downward towards the bend. By fol-

lowing Mr. Bainbridge's method the silk must pass twice round and along the hook ; and his directions for placing the wings are extremely difficult to be put into practice. If properly learned, however, they will be found in the end useful ; and dividing the wings by means of the hackle-feather, is certainly an improvement. Besides, he gives instructions to make only three flies, namely, the hackle, the fly with wings and dubbing, and the fly with wings, dubbing, and hackle, and we have given eight progressive rules for fly-dressing. In conclusion, we will stake our existence, that if all the information contained in this chapter be carefully read and digested, and afterwards put into practice for a few days, any man of moderate comprehension, who has the use of his eyes and fingers, will be able to tie on flies that will kill trout and grayling in every stream of the midland counties ; and if he be a judge of the proper colours, we will warrant that flies so tied will catch the afore-mentioned fish in whatever waters they are found of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

The following is the recipe for the only sort of wax that ought ever to be used in fly-dressing :

Take two ounces of the best and lightest-coloured yellow resin, with one drachm of

bees-wax; put them into a pipkin on a slow fire until completely dissolved; let them simmer for ten minutes. Then add a quarter of an ounce of white pomatum, and allow the whole (constantly stirring it) to simmer for a quarter of an hour longer. Pour the liquid into a basin of clean cold water, when the liquid will instantly assume a thick consistency. In this state, and while it is yet warm, work it by pulling it through the fingers until it be cold. This last operation is necessary to make the wax tough, and to give it that silvery hue which it has when made in perfection.

CHAPTER VII.

A CURIOUS CONTROVERSY SHARPLY COMMENCED,
AND, IT IS HOPED, SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED.

AT a time when the spirit of innovation is considered as a sure proof of talent, it is not wonderful that a startling heresy should have been broached with respect to some of the most established doctrines of angling. The modern possessors of genius—and in this precocious age of ours they are many—disdain in every art to wend their way along the old and beaten roads, and will not condescend to travel in the pursuit of knowledge, unless in class 1st. of some rapid rail-road train. To them our ancestors seem slow coaches in every thing, and any thing that smells of routine strikes their nostrils with an odour quite the reverse of savory. It seems, that since the days of Charles Cotton—that is, for the space of two goodly centuries—we, practised anglers, have been plunged up to the neck and ears in error. He thought it necessary, and

we routine fishers have adopted his opinion, that, in dressing flies, as much care as possible should be taken to imitate the particular fly with an artificial representation of which he meant to deceive and catch fish. Not only, according to our modern scientific schismatics, is this care quite unnecessary; but, though it has been recommended and practised since and before the time of Cotton, it never has as yet succeeded. All the efforts of our predecessors, and all the attentive studies of ourselves, have served only to produce “pretended imitation.” So says a learned professor of zoology — professor too in a metropolitan college — but we hope he will excuse us if we do not take for oracular all that is announced from his professor’s chair. We confess ourselves rather obstinate in some cases — so much so, indeed, that, unlearned as we are, we cannot adopt as true mere assertions unaccompanied with proofs, though they emanate from a professor of high degree, from a philosophical contributor to the “*Encyclopædia Britannica*,” or from a score of smart, but, we some how or other think, superficial writers of the steam-engine school. We have, however, some pretty good authorities on our side, and, if betting were our cue, we could get three professors of the “routine” school backed to kill more trout

and grayling with artificial flies in a given time, on the same rivers, than any six of the “pretended-imitation” professors. They are to tie on their own flies in accordance with their theory, “that it is quite unimportant to imitate any species of living insect;” and we shall tie on ours according to our doctrine, “that it is all-important not only to imitate, as nearly as art can, living insects, but also the different species of those insects.” Let not one of our readers suppose for an instant, that we are “obstructives” in the way of improvement and useful innovation. Not so, by the disinterested honour of an angler; but we are as cautious conservators of the true principles of fly-fishing, as the lord-mayor of London is of the Thames from Richmond to the Medway. But let us oppose to the assertions of the learned the observations of the experienced.

Piscator, in Cotton, has, after minute instructions, tied on a fly, and says to his pupil, Viator, “There’s a fly made: and now, how do you like it?” Viator answers, “In earnest, admirably well; and it perfectly resembles a fly.” Hereupon Mr. Professor Rennie makes the following annotation: — “If so, it is more than ever I saw any angler’s artificial flies do, which, to use Shakspeare’s term, imitate Nature abominably; but, though noways like

natural flies, (and this is not, it would appear, of the slightest importance), they certainly catch fish as if they were." In another note on Cotton the learned professor observes, "Both these extracts from *Venables* are founded upon the notion, that the fish can discriminate the species of flies, than which nothing can be more unfounded, for the angler's flies are not like any species." In another part of his work Cotton says to his pupil, "I am now to tell you next how to make an artificial fly, that will so perfectly resemble him [May-fly], as to be taken in a rough windy day." Whereupon the professor notes, "The resemblance is not much nearer, I should say, than Hamlet's cloud to a camel, or a whale." Lest this opinion contained in notes should escape notice, Mr. Rennie, in an original work, puts it more prominently forward, thus: — "It is still more common, however, for anglers to use artificial baits, made in imitation, or pretended imitation, of those that are natural. I have used the phrase 'pretended imitation,' as strictly applicable to by far the greater number of what are called by anglers 'artificial flies,' because these very rarely indeed bear the most distant resemblance to any living fly or insect whatever, though, if exact imitation were an object, there can be little doubt that it could be accomplished

much more perfectly than is ever done in any of the numerous artificial flies made by the best artists in that line of work. The fish, indeed, appear to seize upon an artificial fly, because, when drawn by the angler along the water, it has the appearance of being a living insect, whose species is quite unimportant, as all insects are equally welcome, though the larger they are, as in the case of grasshoppers, so much the better, because they then furnish a better mouthful. The aim of the angler, accordingly, ought to be to have his artificial fly calculated, by its form and colours, to attract the notice of the fish, in which case he has a much greater chance of success, than by making the greatest efforts to imitate any particular species of fly."

Before we proceed any further, we beg to point out the manifest contradictions in this one extract. First the professor says, that "anglers' artificial flies, very rarely indeed, bear the *most distant resemblance to any living fly or insect whatever*;" and in the very next sentence he adds, "The fish, indeed, appear to seize upon an artificial fly, because, when drawn by the angler along the water, it has the *appearance of being a living insect*." We really cannot, for the life of us, understand how an object which does not bear the most distant resemblance to any living

fly or insect whatever, can, by the mere motion given to it in drawing it along the water, assume the appearance of being a living insect. If mere motion had such a wonderful effect, as that of changing a thing unlike to a thing like, it would be the greatest waste of time in the world, to sit down to dress and dub hooks. Why the hooks themselves, if such were the case, would be quite sufficient for the ordinary purposes of fly-fishing. Besides, it will be seen that the professor again runs into a contradiction, when he says, that the “aim of the angler, accordingly, ought to be, to have his artificial fly calculated, by its *form* and *colours*, to attract the notice of the fish.” What, we will ask, in the name of common sense, is the meaning of the word “form,” as it is here used? Does it not in some degree imply similarity? What form is to be used, we modestly ask the learned professor, in order to attract the notice of the fish? Is it the form of Hamlet’s camel, or whale, or the form of a water-fly? We “pause for a reply.” Now if it be the form of any of the above creatures, the substance used to give such form must produce resemblance, at least, as to shape. What becomes now of the professor’s assertion, that an artificial fly does not “bear the most distant resemblance

to any living fly or insect whatever?" The professor recommends the employment of "*colours* to attract the notice of the fish." Unhappily-chosen word! What things do those great imitators of nature—the poet and the painter—use? Colours! Do we not say the colouring of that poem is good, the colouring of that picture is bad. Why good? Because the colouring bears a resemblance to a certain appearance possessed by the object intended to be depicted or imitated. Why bad? For the very converse reason, because there is lack of resemblance in a particular appearance. Let us now ask Mr. Professor Rennie what colours he recommends. Undoubtedly he will recommend some particular ones. Will he say that they are colours unlike those presented to the eye on the bodies and their members of water-flies? If he do, he will be inconsistent. Will he say that they are to be colours like those presented to the sight by the bodies, &c. of water-flies? If he do, he will still be inconsistent with himself. He has got completely between a cleft stick, and nothing but an honest recantation of his heresy will get him out of it. But we hope he will tell us the *peculiar* colours that are to be used to draw fish to them. It may be said, that, when the

learned professor used the words “*living* insects,” he did so advisedly — that he meant dead insects. Not at all. He has not got even that loop-hole out of which to escape, since he afterwards says, that “fish appear to seize upon an artificial fly, because, when drawn by the angler along the water, it has the appearance of a *living* insect.” Now the whole truth of the matter is, that the professor, great observer of nature and its creations as he unquestionably is, could have no exact means of forming a decisive opinion on this subject. Has he ever balanced himself beneath the water, and observed, with the eye of a fish, the similarity or the dissimilarity that exists between a natural and an artificial fly? Impossible, for two reasons; first, because he could never place himself in the position required to make the observation with the necessary accuracy; secondly, if he did so place himself, he could not see with the eye of a fish. At least, so we routine teachers of the art of artificial-fly making opine.

Before we come to the authorities about to be cited by each party relative to the question in dispute, we have a few words to say on the three assertions contained in the following quotation: — “It [an artificial fly] has the appearance of being a living insect, whose

species is quite unimportant, as *all insects* are equally welcome, though the *larger* they are, as in the case of grasshoppers, so much the better, because they then furnish a better mouthful." First, as to *species*. The dun-drake, or March-brown, is of the genus *bäetis*, and appears, according to the locality of rivers, earlier or later in them, in the month of March. As soon as it appears, it is eagerly devoured by trout. In about four days it becomes the great red-spinner, that is, another species of the dun-drake, which continues on the water longer than the latter fly. Before the dun-drake appears, no fish will take the red-spinner, and generally when the longer-lived latter fly is taken, the dun-drake is refused. Here fish make a striking distinction between species; and in proving that they do, we also prove how necessary it is to imitate them artificially. Moreover, they are of the same size, but their colour is widely different; consequently, different coloured materials must be used in dressing them. Secondly, as to the assertion, that *all insects* are equally welcome; is the common hive-bee at any time equally welcome with the May-fly? And, thirdly, as to *size*; is the May-fly at all times equally as welcome to fish as the wren-fly, one considerably smaller? Mr. Rennie cannot answer

these two latter questions in the affirmative, for every man that ever fished knows that while the May-fly is on the water trout will take no insect so willingly, no matter what it may be ; and that, in the latter months of the summer, trout will not take the May-fly at all, whilst they will avidiously devour the diminutive wren-fly. Those three assertions, then, are reduced to their proper value.

We come now to authorities. The learned professor, in support of his “pretended-imitation” heresy, says, “It tends strongly to corroborate our principle [to wit, the aforesaid heresy], that Bainbridge, who is the best authority on the species of flies, expressly says, respecting a gaudy artificial fly for salmon, that, ‘However fanciful, or varied in shade or materials, it will *frequently* raise fish, *when* all the *imitations* of nature have proved unsuccessful ; indeed so fastidious and *whimsical* are the salmon *at times*, that the more brilliant and *extravagant* the fly, more certain is the angler of diversion.’ ” We have placed certain words in the above passage in italics, that the professor may the better understand it when he reads it again. What ! does the professor teach to his classes, that an exception to a general rule, is the corroboration of a principle ? Mr. Bainbridge simply says — at least such is the way we interpret the passage —

that at certain extraordinary times, when imitations of nature do not succeed, salmon are *then* caught with gaudy flies; and that at such times salmon are so fastidious and whimsical, that is, when they forget their ordinary natural *gout*, and lose their ordinary plain sense, they become enamoured of an extravagant sort of fly. Because one dog or one horse will sometimes eat an orange, is that a proof, or a corroboration of a proof, that dogs or horses are frugiverous? Because a man happens once, twice, or ten times a year, to get intoxicated, and whilst in that state is whimsical enough to prefer a brick-bat to a loaf of bread, is that a proof that he likes the former better or as well as the latter? Salmon do no more when they prefer a gaudy or extravagantly-dressed fly, and Mr. Bainbridge does not say they do. Now to further prove that Mr. Bainbridge is talking only of an exception, and not laying down a principle, and that he would be very sorry to teach any such dangerous doctrine as that professed by Mr. Rennie, we will proceed to quote him in our favour. Mr. Bainbridge recommends five flies for salmon-fishing, only one of which is to be gaudy; one is to be of colours of a sombre cast; another is to be so plainly dressed, that it is called the *quaker* fly; another is to be dressed with wings made of the dark-mottled *brown* or *blackish* fea-

ther of a turkey, and a body of orange camlet mixed with mohair, the legs of the fly to be a *dusky* red or bright *brown* cock's hackle; and another is to represent the common wasp. It therefore, appears, that of five flies with which salmon are caught, there is but one gaudy one, and Mr. Bainbridge, placing this said gaudy fly fourth in his list, shows that he prefers at least three others to it. Consequently, we have three chances to one against the fly that is supposed not to be an imitation of a natural fly. The fifth fly for salmon-fishing, recommended by Mr. Bainbridge, is an imitation of the common wasp. He says that it is "a favourite with the salmon peal, mort, or gilse; and well-grown fish will sometimes rise at this fly in *preference* to *any other*." Here, therefore, is a fourth competitor to the unnatural representation, and we could bring many more if we chose to consult other authors than Bainbridge. We wish to beat the learned professor with his own arms; and, consequently, having proved that he misunderstood the drift of Bainbridge's observations, relative to the gaudy salmon-fly, we will show how anxious that author is, that the water-flies which trout and grayling take should be exactly imitated. Mr. Bainbridge says, "Although the *imitation* of *nature* is the *principal* object to be desired by the fly-maker, yet, in

some instances, it will be advisable to enlarge or diminish the proportions of the artificial fly ; as the state of the water may require." To be sure ; in order, that to the fish the imitation may be the more precise. The imitation of nature is the rule—the deviation from it, or the use of a gaudy fly, the exception.

Mr. Professor Rennie quotes Sir H. Davy in corroboration of his principle. The following is the passage : "*I imagine*," says Sir H. Davy, "salmon take the gaudy fly, with its blue kingfisher and golden pheasant's feathers, for a small *fish* : I never saw a dragon-fly drop on the water or taken by a fish." Sir H. Davy gives no decided opinion ; he simply *imagines*, that the gaudy fly is taken for the representation of a *small fish*. It, therefore, is not a "pretended imitation." But what says Mr. Bainbridge, the learned professor's "best authority on the species of flies," in reference to this very point. That gentleman says, "The most successful bait [for salmon] which can be used is, the artificial fly. Those made in *imitation* of the *dragon* flies are the most to be depended upon, as these insects are *constantly hovering* over the water, consequently, are more familiar to the view of the fish." Sir H. Davy says he never saw "a dragon-fly *drop* on the water or *taken* by a fish." But if "dragon-

flies are constantly hovering over the water," is it not natural to suppose, that when the imitation of them *drops* on the water, the fish take it, since they are pleased to get near them, and within easy reach that which they suppose represents an object "familiar to the view?" In no part of Sir H. Davy's work do we find the "pretended-imitation" principle in any way favoured. On the contrary, we often find such passages as the following: "The true fisherman's flies, those *imitated* in our art, &c." Mr. Alfred Ronalds, who certainly is not a routine fly-fisher, but rather of the innovating school, says, after giving a reason for a trout taking a *non-descript* artificial fly, that "it furnishes no plea to quacks and bunglers, who, inventing, or espousing, a new theory, whereby to hide their *want of skill*, or *spare their pains*, would kill all the fish with one fly, as some doctors would cure all diseases by one pill. If a trout rejects the brown hive-bee at the time that he greedily swallows the March-brown fly, it is clear that the *imitation* should be as *exact as possible* of the last, and as *dissimilar as possible* to the first." In another passage of the same author Mr. Professor Rennie's heresy is thus combatted: — "It should never be forgotten, that, let the state of the weather, or the water (in respect of clearness), be what it may, success in fly-

fishing very much depends upon showing the fish *a good imitation*, both in *colour* and *size*, of that insect which he has taken last." Mr. Taylor, who calls his work, "Angling reduced to a complete *science*," and must not, therefore, be considered a "routine" fisher, after giving very minute directions how to dress a fly, concludes by saying, "The head being then nicely completed, the fly will be most *natural* and beautiful." Again, the same author, with much of sound sense — but which is in direct opposition to the learned professor's theory — remarks, that "as you cannot keep the artificial flies to sit on the surface of the water, as some of the natural ones do, they are taken for those that are driven under by the current, which makes the fish more eager in taking them, for fear they should recover and get away." In another passage Mr. Taylor makes the following excellent observations, which decidedly militate against the heretical principle of professor Rennie:—"When you go out a fly-fishing, you should not forget to have with you a little of all your different materials for fly-making; for the fishes are sometimes so whimsical, that you may see them take insignificant flies freely, which at other times they would not look at. When this is the case, catch one of such flies, and try how far *art* can *imitate nature*, by

making one as *nearly similar* as you can." Best, who by many is considered a good authority, remarks, "The *imitations* of *nature*, in regard to the flies necessary for use ; suiting the different colours so *exactly* as to *resemble* the *natural* fly ; and observing the *greatest nicety* in regard to its *symmetry*, contribute to make it [the art of fly-fishing] still more delightful. Whenever he [the fly-fisher] makes a fly, let him have the *natural one always before him*, which will enable him to be a competent judge of the materials most necessary to dub it with." Mr. Hansard, an angler of extensive experience, advises you, "If you make any flies while out, to catch the *natural* fly, and, seated on your basket in some sheltered corner, to try your skill. Always take a few of the *real flies* home to be *copied* during unfavourable weather."

We have thought it absolutely necessary to write this chapter, for unless we disproved the theory of professor Rennie, and we flatter ourselves that we have triumphantly done so, all the instructions, given with such elaborate minuteness in the preceding chapter, would be so much loss of time, and, what is worse, would be tending to propagate false doctrines. The same observation applies to the chapter that will succeed this. It is scarcely necessary

to add, that it is our own unshaken and sincere opinion, that artificial flies, when in the water, are like either the living or dead insects which fish prey upon. The closer the imitation, the surer the success of the angler.



CHAPTER VIII.

FLIES FOR EVERY MONTH IN THE YEAR.

THIS chapter will be a very long one, but it will be the most important, at least so we think, in the whole work. The list of flies we give is numerous — perhaps too much so — but there is not one that will not kill fish more or less in proper time and place. All those flies are dressed according to our father's method, and we believe we may add, that he was the most successful fly-fisher that appeared on the Dove during the last fifty years. We have tried — and seen tried — other flies in competition with them, and we frankly declare, that we have never known them equalled.* They will kill trout and grayling in every stream of the midland counties, and, we dare assert, in every river in the empire where those fish are to be found. The angler has only to vary their size according to the size of the flies

* If any person chooses to try London-dressed flies, the best are those made and sold by Messrs. Bowness and Chevalier, 12, Bell Yard, Temple Bar, London.

that are bred on the different English streams. And be it remarked, that the smaller and more shaded the river, stream, or brook, the larger the fly. On wide and slightly-sheltered rivers, the flies are small. As a general rule, use for the Dove flies tied on No. 2 Kendal hook; for the smaller and warmer streams of Derbyshire and Staffordshire, flies dressed on No. 3 Kendal hook. Many strangers, celebrated fly-fishers, and particularly the late Sir Humphrey Davy, invariably used our flies in preference to all others when they came to fish on the Dove and the streams adjacent to it. It was Sir Humphrey Davy, when once on a visit to the hospitable owner of Ilam Hall, that suggested to our father, who always accompanied him in his fly-fishing excursions, the necessity of writing such a work as the present. In fact, so anxious was Sir Humphrey to have the result of our father's experience communicated to the public, that he volunteered the aid of his literary talents, to forward such an undertaking. Though the task has fallen to be executed by less able hands, still if zeal and industry can supply the place of talent and celebrity, the public will not have to regret much that Sir Humphrey Davy was not the compiler of this Treatise. Now to our list of flies.

JANUARY.*

Red-brown Fly: — The body of this fly is to be dubbed with dark-brown mohair. The wings are to be made of the feather from a starling or dotterel's wing. It is to be tied on or dressed with red silk. Will kill from eleven to three o'clock.†

Blue Dun: — The body‡ of this fly is to be

* We confess we begin the fly-fishing season rather early, but we do so, that the enthusiast in the art may not want instructions for any month of the year. Flies are to be found on the water in the coldest months of the year. "Even," Sir H. Davy says, "in December and January, there are a few small gnats or water-flies on the water in the middle of the day, in bright days, or when there is sunshine." We caught ourselves this year, on the 19th of February, in the midst of the snow and frost, two fish, a grayling and a trout, and we did not endeavour to catch any more, for we simply wanted a single specimen of each fish as a model for our artist to design after. The grayling was caught with a dark-blue-dun hackle, and the trout with the common furnace hackle. They weighed each exactly one pound.

† With this fly our father caught early one day in January on the Dove, between Norbury Weir and Dove Leys, thirteen grayling and five trout. Four of the grayling weighed two pounds each. The fish were taken between half-past eleven and two o'clock.

Whenever we do not mention what sized hook a fly is to be dressed upon, it must be understood that we mean a No. 2 Kendal.

‡ The silk with which the fly is dressed, is often sufficient to form the body of a slender fly. We shall often, there-

formed of the straw-coloured silk, with which it is dressed. A blue-dun cock's hackle for legs, to be wound round the hook under the wings three times. The wings from the feather of an old* starling's wing.

This fly must be made rather full in the body, and in the winter months, and when the water is high, it must be dressed on a No. 3 Kendal hook. It may with safety be accounted a standard fly.

Light-blue Dun : — The body to be of greenish-yellow silk ; legs, a soft hackle-feather of a light-blue-dun colour, to be wound round the hook close to the wings four times, and in a way that the silk may be clearly discerned. Wings, the feather of an old starling.†

fore, use the expressions, “ body to be of such and such coloured silk,” which means nothing more, than that the fly is to be dressed with silk of the colour indicated.

* For flies with dark bodies use generally the feathers of an old starling ; for those, the bodies of which are of lighter hue, use the feathers of the young starling taken from the nest when nearly full fledged. Note, also, that the wings of flies are generally made from the feather of the wing of the bird recommended for such purpose.

† This fly is an excellent one for grayling during the cold months, whether in the beginning or the latter end of the year. From January to April it should be dressed on a No. 3 Kendal, when the water is low on a No. 2. The water makes the silk body appear entirely green.

Golden Ostrich, or Golden Palmer-fly: — The body, a black-ostrich herl ribbed with gold-twist; a dark-red cock's hackle for legs. To be dressed sometimes with orange, sometimes with puce-coloured silk. A famous fly for grayling. Hook, Kendal No. 3. Will kill all day long.

Esterhazy Dun: — Bright Esterhazy-coloured silk for body; blue-dun hackle for legs; wings, from the feather of the fieldfare's wing. An extremely killing fly on a cold windy day, from half-past ten to three o'clock.

Peacock Fly: — Peacock herl for body; a bluish-dun hackle for legs. To be dressed with greenish Pomona silk.

Let us here remind the reader, that the flies that will kill in the beginning of the year, will also kill at the latter end. Thus, then, the flies that are taken in January, February, and March, will also be taken in November, October, and September; making the months correspond in the way we have written them down.

FEBRUARY.

The flies that we recommended for last month will be found serviceable in the begin-

ning, and frequently throughout the whole of this month.

Dark Dun : — Body of dark-plum-coloured silk ; legs, a blue-dun hackle-feather ; wings, of the feather of a fieldfare. This fly kills well in all the cold months.

Plain Palmer : — Black-ostrich herl for body ; over that a red cock's hackle for legs. To be dressed with red silk. Hook, Kendal No. 3.

Red Fly : — Body, dark-red dubbing, to be chosen from the hair found in tan-yards ; cock's hackle of the same colour for legs. To be dressed with orange-coloured silk. Wings, a starling's feather, or if you wish to be still more exact, the dun covert feather of a mallard's wing. A good grayling fly, and it will kill both in March and April.

Another Blue Dun : — A very small portion of the water-rat's fur, spun round yellow silk for body. A blue-dun hackle for legs. Wings, from the feather of a starling. There cannot possibly be a more killing fly than this during all the cold months.

Red Dun : — Esterhazy-coloured silk for

body ; reddish-dun hackle for legs. Wings, from the feather of the fieldfare.

Furnace Fly : — Body, orange-coloured silk ; legs, cock's furnace hackle.* Wings, a fieldfare's feather. A standard fly, killing well all the year through.

MARCH.

The same description of flies, but dressed of a smaller size, that were recommended for last month, will be taken in this.

Another Blue Dun : — A small quantity of water-rat's fur, twisted round straw-coloured silk for body ; a blue-dun cock's hackle for legs. Wings, of the light fibres from the feather of a fieldfare's wing. This fly kills well on cold windy mornings.

Dark-claret Fly : — Body, deep-claret-coloured silk ; legs, a cock's dark-red hackle ; wings, from the feather out of the wing of the land-rail.

* The furnace hackle is a dark red, having a black streak running from the root of the stem, on each side of it, up the middle of the feather. The extremities of the fibres on each side of the feather are likewise black. The more purely dark the red part of the feather is the better—it should be red through and through.

Another Dark Dun: — Esterhazy silk for body; blue-dun hackle for legs; wings, of the feather of a starling.

Winter Brown: — Body, puce-coloured silk; legs, a dark furnace hackle; wings, from the feather of a fieldfare.

The March Brown, or Dun-drake: — This fly is so important a one, that we feel bound to give, in conjunction with our own information, that of others respecting it. We are writing on the twentieth of March, and we desire the reader to bear in mind the lateness and the coldness of the season. On Friday last, the sixteenth, we took a stroll to the Dove. The morning promised fair, and though the river was dashed, and by two feet of water too full, we expected a tolerable day's sport. Just as we began to fish, there came on a mingled storm of wind, rain, and hail. Notwithstanding, we resolved, for a moment, to "bide the pelting of the pitiless storm," and in less than ten minutes we caught, with this fly, three trout and one grayling, each within five yards of the other. There was not a single natural fly visible on the water, and each of the fish weighed upwards of a pound. One of the trout would have weighed more than two

pounds, had it been in full season. On the 23rd of March, 1836, we killed, with this fly, from one and the same standing, sixteen trout and one grayling. We fished with two flies of this sort on our casting-line at the same time, and we caught three times, successively, two fish at a cast. We should have caught many more, were it not for an accident that occurred to our tackle, for before we could repair the damage caused by it, rising time was over. From the middle of March, to the middle of April, it is decidedly the best and most killing fly that can be fished with. We recommend the angler to fish with two flies of this sort on his casting-line at the same time, one ribbed with gold-twist, and the other without. The best time of fishing with this fly is, between the hours of eleven and three o'clock, especially if the water is curled by a smart breeze.

We dress this fly as follows: Body, orange-coloured silk, or deep-straw-colour, on which wind for dubbing the fox-coloured fur taken from a hare's poll; legs, a honey-dun hackle; wings, the top of the light or inner fibres stripped from the feather of the hen pheasant's wing. Rib with gold-twist for your tail-fly; let your dropper, when you use one, be without any twist.

Mr. Bainbridge's way of dressing this fly :— The wings are made from the dark-mottled feather from the tail of a partridge, or mottled feather from the ptarmigan, in its summer plumage ; the body, of the fur from the hare's ear, intermixed with a small portion of yellow worsted, well dubbed together ; a grizzled hackle for legs ; and, if the imitator choose to be exact, two fibres, from the same feather which composed the wings, will enable him to form the tail.*

Mr. Ronalds's method :— Body, fur of the hare's face ribbed over with olive silk, and tied with brown ; tail, two stands of a partridge's feather ; wings, feather of the pheasant's wing, which may be found of the exact shade ; legs, a feather from the back of a partridge.

Best's way :— Wings are made of the feather of the pheasant's wing, which is full of fine shade, and exactly resembles the wing of the fly ; the body is made of the bright part of

* The learner will have already observed, that we dress our flies without tails. They are of no use, and Mr. Bainbridge properly says of them, “ This appendage to the flies in their natural state, need not be attended to in the artificial formation, as it is of little importance in aiding the success of the angler, although, if flies are dressed for sale, it improves their appearance, and renders them more showy and attractive.”

hare's fur, mixed with a little of the red part of squirrel's fur, ribbed with yellow silk, and a partridge's hackle wrapped over twice or thrice under the but of the wing.

Mr. Hansard's mode: — The wings and whisks at the tail may be made from the spotted tail-feathers of a young partridge. For the body, use the dark fur which has yellow tips from a hare's ear, and tie it on with reddish-buff silk ; if you are inclined to use a hackle for legs, let it be a dun cock's, or a small partridge's feather. As the fly grows lighter, alter the body, and use the yellow buff fur from a hare's ear, tied with pale yellow ; and let the hackle be a light dun with yellow edges, or a dull ginger one.

Commendations of this Fly: — Mr. Bainbridge says, "This very excellent fly generally appears about the middle of March, and is strongly recommended as a good killer from eleven until three o'clock." Best says, "There cannot be too much said in commendation of this fly, both for its duration, and the sport it affords the angler." Bowlker says, "This fly may be used with great success in warm gloomy days ; and when the brown fly is on the water, the fish will refuse all other kinds."

We can bear ample testimony to the truth of these eulogistic observations.

March-brown Dun-fly: — Body, hare's fur from the back of the neck, twisted round primrose-coloured silk; legs, a brownish-dun hackle; and wings from a hen pheasant's wing-feather.

APRIL.

Orange Dun: — Body, orange-coloured silk; legs, a blue-dun hackle; wings, a fieldfare's wing-feather.

Cow-dung Fly: — Body, yellow lamb's-wool, mixed with a little brown mohair; legs, ginger-coloured hackle; wings, from the wing-feather of a land-rail. To be dressed with orange-coloured silk. This is a killing fly on windy days, and on them only.

The Golden and Plain Palmer flies are to be used this month, tied on a No. 2 Kendal hook.

The Grannom, or Green-tail: — This fly comes in about the middle of April, and lasts three weeks or thereabouts. On warm days it is a good fly during the morning and evening, when no brown flies are on the water. "It

derives the name of *green-tail*," says Bainbridge, "from a bunch of eggs, of a green colour, which drop on the water at the moment of the fly's touching that element." The body is made of the dark fur from a hare's ear, mixed with a small portion of blue fur; the tail is made of the green herl taken from the eye of a peacock's feather; the legs, a pale-ginger hackle; and the wings, of a hen pheasant's feather.

Light-blue Dun: — This fly is to be dressed exactly like that of the same colour recommended for January, except that the hook must be a No. 2 Kendal.

Yellow Dun: — Body, yellow silk; legs, a yellow-dun hackle; and wings from a feather of the red-wing.

Stone Fly: — Body of the fur from the dark part of a hare's ear mixed with a little brown and yellow mohair, and ribbed over with yellow silk rather closely towards the tail; legs, a dark-grizzled cock's hackle of great length; wings, which must lie flat upon the body and not be longer, or at least very little longer, than the body, to be made of the dark-mottled feather of a hen pheasant or pea-hen; tail, two rabbit's whiskers. This fly is in season from

the beginning of April until the middle of June, and is a killing fly early and late in rough streams, and in pools during a strong wind. Hook, No. 4 Kendal.

Sand Fly : — Body, from the fur off the hare's poll ; legs, a ginger or light-red hackle ; wings, from the feather of the land-rail's wing. To be dressed with bright-orange-coloured silk on a No. 3 Kendal hook.

This is a first-rate fly, and is justly a great favourite with anglers, since it will kill well for at least three successive months, namely, April, May, and June. It may be used all day long. On account of the importance we attach to this fly, we think it necessary to bring to the aid of our favourable testimony the praises of other fly-fishers. Mr. Bainbridge says, "This may be considered as one of the best flies for affording diversion which can possibly be selected ; for it may be used successfully, at all hours of the day, from April to the end of September, and is equally alluring to trout and grayling." Mr. Ronalds observes, "My own experience leads me to recommend the use of it during April and May, on days when there is no abundance of any particular insect on the water."

MAY.

Spider Fly : — Lead-coloured silk for body ; for legs, a wood-cock's hackle, wrapped three or four times round the hook.

Lest some of our readers may think this mode of dressing this fly too simple, we give the way recommended by Mr. Ronalds : — Body, dark-dun, or lead-coloured silk thread dressed very fine ; wings, from the underside of a feather of the wood-cock's wing ; legs, a black cock's hackle rather long, wound twice, only round the body.

Iron Blue : — Body of the blue fur of the water-rat or monkey, warped on with purple silk, and afterwards neatly picked out. Wings, from a tom-tit's tail. An excellent fly.

Another Dark Dun : — Body, a small quantity of the blue fur of a water-rat warped on with yellow silk ; legs, a blue-dun hackle ; wings, of the feather from under the water-hen's wing. If delicately dressed, a very killing fly.

Another sort of Palmer : — Body, brown peacock's herl ; legs, a dark-red hackle. To be dressed with red silk.

Little Yellow May-fly: — Body of yellow silk; legs, a light-ginger hackle; wings, a fieldfare's feather stained yellow.

Another way: — Body, yellow monkey's fur; wings, from the feather of a dotterel's wing. To be dressed with lemon-coloured silk. Both these little flies are capital killers.

Silver-twist Hackle: — Body, of a black-ostrich herl, ribbed with silver-twist; legs, a black cock's hackle. To be dressed with puce-coloured silk.

Fern Fly: — Body, the brown fur from a fox's breast; legs, a pale-dun hackle; wings, of the palest fibres from the feather of a thrush's wing. To be dressed with orange-coloured silk. A killing fly for grayling.

JUNE.

The Green-drake, or May-fly:* — The reason we place this celebrated fly in our list

* The following is a condensed history of this "delicate and fragile creature, this emblem of human life, this being of a day." The ephemera, or May-fly, undergoes the same number of metamorphoses as the rest of insects. As a worm and nymph it is an inhabitant of the waters, where it acquires its growth so slowly, that, with regard to the length of these portions of its life, it has been at least as

for June is, that it is not in full season on the Dove, in the vicinity of Ashborne, until about the 4th of this month. In the smaller streams in the neighbourhood, particularly those that are most shaded from cold winds, it appears a week earlier. In the vicinity of Bakewell it appears a fortnight sooner; and on the Dove, near Rocester and Calwich, it appears, generally, in the last week of May. "Its season," remarks Mr. Ronalds, "depends greatly upon the state of the weather; and it will be found earlier upon the slowly-running parts of the stream (such as mill-dams) than

well treated as the rest of insects. Swammerdam asserts, that the ephemeræ continue two or three years in their larva and pupa states; and that it is only when they have attained to the utmost perfection of which their organisation is susceptible, that they so speedily perish. Some of these worms pass their lives in habitations, each one in his own. This is nothing but a hole formed in the bed of a river; others, on the contrary, may be termed wanderers; and they are sometimes seen to swim, sometimes to walk on the various substances found in the water, and sometimes they remain tranquil and concealed under a stone. Their habitations are always made in a soft soil; but should necessity force the insect to provide a habitation in a coarser soil, it takes especial care to protect its tender body by lining the inside of its dwelling with fine earth. As the entrances to its dwelling are situated below the surface of the water, the insect is surrounded by the element, and lives for two years in perfect security within its retreat. With this, as with many other insects, its house not only shelters but feeds it; for it is easy to perceive through its transparent body, that its intestines are filled with the same earth in which it has constructed its dwelling: it is probable, that the soil is

on rapid places." What Cotton says about the season of this fly, may be taken as a general rule, "The green-drake comes in about the 20th of May, or betwixt that and the latter end, (for they are sometimes sooner, and sometimes later, according to the quality of the year), but never well taken till towards the end of this month, and the beginning of June." Mr. Hansard observes, "The green-drake is in season from the 20th of May till the 20th of June, but it is most plentiful just at the end of the one month and the beginning of the next; a dry season and low water is

impregnated with some nutritious substance which the insect's organisation appropriates. After having sojourned within these dens for nearly two years, and changed them as often as its increase of bulk demanded a more spacious lodgment, the insect undergoes those transformations which permit it to enjoy in another element a momentary existence. Nevertheless, short as this term of life is, the insects are surrounded at the very threshold of their new existence with the most imminent peril. The transformation which is to convert the aquatic into the aërial being, is attended with all those risks which we have seen attend the gnat: the ephemera is at the mercy of a gust of air; if once thrown off its balance while endeavouring to extricate itself from its larval skin, it is lost for ever; for it has nothing to dread so much as the element in which it has lived so long. When, however, the insects have once become fitted for their new mode of life, they burst at sunset from the banks of the river which they have inhabited in incredible numbers. It is thus that these creatures burst forth from the waters: it would appear, however, that though the time of the year in which they become aërial beings differs in different countries, yet the insects of the same

most favourable for this fly, which may be used from eight o'clock in the morning till six in the evening, and when they are abundant no other fly will be taken." The artificial green-drake is generally dressed on too large a scale, which is the principal reason that many persons do not think it a killing fly. It should never be dressed on a hook larger than No. 9 Red-ditch, or a No. 3 Kendal; but the latter hook, unless ordered expressly for the purpose, is too short in the shank. It is of little use to fish with the artificial green-drake, unless there be a strong wind curling the water, and when such

country appear at the very same time each year; nay, further, the very hour of the day at which they should rise from the water into the air is fixed to such a nicety, that in each succeeding day these swarms of insects come forth at the precise instant at which they had appeared the preceding day. No insect executes an operation (that of casting its larval skin) at once so important and laborious, with equal celerity. We do not draw our arms from the sleeves of a coat more quickly, than the ephemera extricates its body, wings, legs, and the long caudal appendages, from a sheath in which these various parts are folded and cramped up. We could hardly expect that an insect which, when perfect, is so frail and delicate, could exert, in its imperfect state, so much force as the act of getting rid of its larval skin appears to demand. It would seem, however, that the address and strength necessary to effect its emancipation, is supplied at the moment of need by a power independent of the will of the insect. Swammerdam's experiments prove, that every part of the body of the insect is in itself capable of its full developement. He detached a wing still inclosed within its larval skin; it immediately unfolded itself, and attained all the natural dimensions which it

has been the case, we have frequently found the artificial fly taken in preference to the natural one. The time of the day to fish with it is, from eleven to four o'clock. This fly is dressed as follows :

Body of an ostrich herl died a straw colour, and ribbed with gold-twist ; legs, a ginger hackle ; wings, a mallard's feather from the side under the wing, died a dingy yellow colour ; two whips of a brown peacock's herl between the wings and the shank of the hook, to form the head of the fly.

would have acquired had it still remained in its natural situation, communicating with the vessels of the body. Reaumer crushed the head of these creatures while in the very act of transformation, nevertheless the metamorphosis was performed with the same celerity as if the cruelty had not been practised. Neither did immersion in spirits of wine prevent the completion of the change. The insect burst through its trammels, and instantly perished. The females of the ephemera seem to be born only to perpetuate their species, and, accordingly, as soon as they can use their wings, so soon they begin to lay their eggs ; a creature, whose life in a perfect state is comprised in a few hours, cannot afford to waste the precious moments ; nature, therefore, has foreseen and contrived, that her object should be thoroughly attained in the shortest time. They lay about eight hundred eggs, nevertheless they are deposited in a shorter time than another insect would consume in laying only one. Nature has crowded into their short life an operation to which other insects are not subjected. After they have gone through the ordinary metamorphoses common to most insects, and when they are apparently perfect insects, they again cast their skins, and change a vestment which has scarcely time to become old.

Abridged from the 51st Number of the Family Library.

The following is a proper recipe to die the mallard's feather of the colour required. Cut into minute slices a small quantity of the inner bark of the barberry tree, add a piece of alum about the size of a small walnut, then boil the whole for ten minutes in a pint of rain or soft water. Immerse, for a minute, your feathers in the boiling liquid; take them out and wash them in clean water, and afterwards expose them for two hours to the action of the heat of the sun.

Grey Drake: — Body, puce-coloured silk ribbed with silver-twist; legs, a dark-blue-dun hackle; wings, a sooty-grey mallard or widgeon's feather. Hook, No. 9 Redditch.

On this fly Mr. Ronalds's remarks are so apposite, that we will confine ourselves to quoting them: — "This is the metamorphosis of the female green-drake. She lives three or four days, and is caught by the fish whilst laying her eggs on the water. She lasts a few days longer than the green-drake, and is to be fished with in the evening. Some fishermen prefer other flies in season to this; when well made, it will, however, furnish excellent sport, especially towards the evening."

Black Gnat: — Body, the feather from the

green-plover's crest; wings, a fieldfare's feather. To be dressed on a No. 1 Kendal hook, with dark-purple-coloured silk.

Peacock Fly: — Body, a peacock's herl; legs, a bluish-dun hackle. To be dressed with Pomona green silk.

Light Mackerel Fly: — Body, light-orange silk, ribbed with gold-twist; legs, light-red hackle; wings, light-grey feather of a mallard.

JULY.

Dark Mackerel Fly: — Body, purple silk ribbed with gold-twist; legs, a dark furnace hackle; wings, a darkish grey mallard's feather.

Ash Fly: — Body, orange-coloured silk; legs, a furnace hackle; wings, from a woodcock's wing-feather.

Orange Dun: — Body, bright-orange-coloured silk; legs, a light-blue-dun hackle; wings, from a fieldfare's feather.

Red Ant Fly: — Body, bright-brown peacock's herl; legs, bright-red cock's hackle;

wings, starling's feather. To be dressed with bright-red-coloured silk.

Black Ant Fly : — Body, black-ostrich herl; legs, a dark hackle; wings, of a fieldfare's feather. To be dressed with silk of a dark-puce colour.

Wren's Hackle : — Body, light-brown silk; legs, the feather of a wren's tail. This little fly will kill at all times — especially during the summer months — when the water is low and clear.

Grouse Hackle : — Body, deep-orange-coloured silk; legs, the reddish-brown-mottled feather of the male red grouse. Will kill in July, August, and September.

AUGUST.

Oak Fly : — Body, a black-ostrich herl, wound thinly round the hook; legs, a dark-red hackle, stained deeper than the natural colour; wings, from the feather of a woodcock's wing. To be dressed with orange-coloured silk. This fly will kill from the latter end of April to the beginning of September.

Little Whirling-blue : — Body dubbed with hare's fur from the back of the neck, mixed with a little yellow mohair ; legs, a blue-dun hackle ; wings, a starling's wing-feather. To be dressed with primrose-coloured silk.

Summer Dun : — Body, of greenish-yellow silk ; legs, a soft light-blue-dun hackle, to be wrapped three times quite close under the wings, so as to show the silk body well ; wings, from the wing-feather of a starling just fledged. Let this fly be dressed as delicately as possible, and it will be found a very killing one.

Peacock Fly : — This fly should be repeated, but it should be dressed on a No. 1 Kendal hook.

Brown Fly : — Body of yellow silk, of the finest twist possible ; legs, a red cock's hackle, whipped twice round the body under the wings, which are to be from the feather of a land-rail's wing.

All the flies for July will kill more or less in this month.

SEPTEMBER.

Little Pale Blue : — Body of a minute portion of pale-blue fur from the water-rat,

mixed with a little fine fur of any sort, died yellow ; legs, a very pale-blue hackle ; wings, a young starling's feather. To be dressed very delicately, with fine pale-yellow silk. A good killer.

Willow Fly : — Body, a small portion of monkey or water-rat's fur spun sparingly on yellow silk ; legs, a dark-blue-dun hackle ; wings, a fieldfare's feather. This fly will also kill on fine days in February.

Golden Dun : — Body, deep-straw-coloured silk, ribbed with gold-twist ; legs, a honey-dun hackle ; wings, the palest feather of a young starling. This little fly will also kill well on warm days towards the end of May.

Cinnamon Fly : — Body, any sort of dark-brown fur ; a pale-ginger hackle for legs ; wings, the pale-reddish-brown feather of a hen. A good fly both during this month and the last, on a windy day, or in a smart shower.

N. B. The same sort of flies that killed in April will be found equally serviceable during this month. For October, use the same flies you fished with in March ; for November, the same sort of flies that were

recommended for February ; for December — do not fly-fish at all.

NIGHT FLIES.

The flies used for night-fishing are generally imitations of moths. We can recommend no more than three of them.

The White Moth : — Body, a white ostrich-herl ; legs, a white cock's hackle. Wings, from the feather of the white owl. To be tied with white silk on a No. 4 Kendal hook. When you fish with this fly put a gentle on the hook.

Brown Moth : — Body, dark-brown bear's fur ; legs, a brown hackle ; wings, the brown owl's feather, to be dressed with dark-brown silk, on the same sized hook as that for the last fly. A cad-bait on the point of the hook will render the lure more enticing.

Cream-coloured Moth : — Body of any fine cream-coloured fur ; legs, a pale-yellow hackle ; wings, the feathers of the yellow owl of the deepest cream-colour.

Black Clobber : — Body, black-ostrich herl, thickly warped round the hook ; legs, a large

black hackle; wings, the darkest fibres of a wild-goose's wing-feather. As we remarked before, the *Stone-fly* will be found to kill late at night. In fly-fishing by night use a short line, and use but one of the above flies, of course, always as a stretcher. During the darkest parts of the night, fish with the white moth; as the night becomes clearer, use the cream-coloured and brown moths; and towards morning, fish with the black clocker. Night-fishing with the fly can be practised successfully only during the hot summer nights. As you can seldom see the fish rise at your night-flies, you must have an attentive ear, and hand; and as soon as you hear or feel a fish rise, you must strike at him. Make use of strong tackle, as the fish taken by night are generally large ones.

You have now read, patient reader, a list of flies, which we firmly believe will be found superior to any as yet recommended; and, if they be dressed according to the directions we have given, we will guarantee, and back that guarantee by any pledge, that they will be freely taken by trout and grayling, in every river, stream, and brook inhabited by those fish in the united kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE NATURE, HABITS, AND ORGANISATION
OF THE COMMON TROUT.

SALMO FARIO.

IN giving an account of all that relates to this beautiful fish—the handsomest, taking every thing into consideration, that swims our streams—we shall do little more than copy and condense the copious and correct chapter written by Mr. Yarrell, vice-president of the Zoological Society, on the subject. The common trout is too widely diffused, and too gene-

rally known, to make any enumeration of particular localities* necessary. It is an inhabitant of most of the rivers and lakes of Great Britain; and so closely identified with the pursuits and gratifications of sportsmen, that those landed proprietors who possess streams of water favourable to the production and growth of trout, preserve them with great care and at considerable expense. The trout, though a voracious feeder, and thus affording excellent diversion to the experienced angler,

* “The favourite haunts in which the trout delights, and where the angler is most likely to meet with diversion, are, the junction of two streams — the tails of currents — below bridges — near old weirs or pieces of rock — where the roots of trees are exposed by the bank having fallen in — under hollow banks; and an excellent mode of enticing a good fish is, to throw the fly against the opposite bank, so that it may drop gently from thence to the water; also, wherever there is a fall of water, or a whirlpool; as when on the watch for food, they take post at the foot or sides of agitated waters, lying in wait for such flies, &c. as the motion of the element may drive before it.” *Bainbridge.*

“To enumerate the rivers, streams, and brooks of this country, which the common trout inhabits, would be an endless and useless task; he may be said to frequent almost all of them, and will even sometimes be discovered in a mere ditch (in spawning time), having scarcely depth of water enough to cover the back. He delights in rapid clear-running waters, with a rocky or gravelly bottom. His favourite haunts are the tail of a stream, the end of a little rapid, or swifter running portion of the current, the junction of little rapids formed by water passing round an obstruction in the midst of the general current, and where a chain of bubbles or little floating objects indicate the course of the principal current; which course is chiefly

is so vigilant, cautious, and active, that great skill, as well as patience, are required to insure success. During the day the larger-sized fish move but little from their accustomed haunts; but towards evening, and during the night, they rove in search of small fish, insects, and their various larvæ, upon which they feed with eagerness. The young trout fry may be seen throughout the day, sporting on the shallow gravelly scours of the stream, where the want

dependent upon various reflections of the water, from projecting banks, rocks, scours, and shoals, and may often be guessed at, when not sufficiently visible, by attending to the position of the banks, &c. At roots of trees, or in other places where the froth (called in Staffordshire Beggar's Balm) collects, and in little whirlpools and eddies, he will often be found. All such places are by far the most favourable for sport; for insects follow the same course as the bubbles, &c. and are sought there by the fish. The larger trout are on the scours in the night, chasing minnows and other small fish. In the day they are cautiously watching for food in deep holes, under hollow banks, or roots of trees, or at the angles of rocks. In May and June, when the fish are strong, they are also to be found in the more rapid parts of the water." *Ronalds.*

"Large trout always hide themselves under the same bank, stone, or weed, and come out from their permanent habitations to feed. When they have fled to their haunt, they may be taken there by the hand; and on this circumstance the practice of tickling trout is founded. A favourite place for a large trout in rivers is, an eddy, behind a rock or stone, where flies and small fishes are carried by the force of the current; and such haunts are rarely unoccupied, for if a fish is taken out of them, his place is soon supplied by another, who quits for it a less convenient situation." *Sir H. Davy.*

of sufficient depth of water, or the greater caution of larger and older fish, prevent their appearance. Though vigilant and cautious in the extreme, the trout is also bold and active. A pike and a trout put into a confined place together, had several battles for a particular spot, but the trout was eventually the master. The season of spawning with the trout is generally in the month of October, at which period the adult fish make their way up the stream; and the under jaw of the old male exhibits, in a smaller degree, the elongation and curvature observed to obtain in the male salmon. The trout varies considerably in appearance in different localities; so much so, as to have induced the belief, that several species exist.* It is,

* “Indeed, considering the sea trout as the type of the species *trout*, it is, I think, probable, that all the other trouts may be considered as varieties, where the differences of food and of habits have occasioned, in a long course of ages, differences of shape and colours, transmitted to offspring in the same manner as in the variety of dogs, which may all be referred to one primitive type.” *Sir H. Davy.*

“There are a great number of varieties of trout, which different naturalists have deemed to be distinct species; but Professor Jurine of Geneva, who studied their changes for many years, under very favourable circumstances, came to the conclusion, that there is only one species—the *Salmo Fario*, or common trout.” *Rennie.*

“The variety in the shape and colour of trouts, which are taken in different rivers and pools, has induced some persons to imagine, that there are three distinct kinds of this fish, namely, the *red*, the *yellow*, and the *white*, the

indeed, probable, that more than one species of river trout may exist in this country; but when we consider geologically the various strata traversed by rivers in their course, the effect these variations of soil must produce upon the water, and the influence which the constant operation of the water is likely to produce upon the fish that inhabit it—when we reflect also on the great variety and quality of the food afforded by different rivers, depending also on soil and situation—and the additional effect which these combined causes, in their various degrees, are likely to produce—we shall not be much surprised at the variations, both in size and colour, which are found to occur. That two trout of very different appearance and quality should be found within a limited locality in the same lake or river, is not so easily explained; and close examination of the various parts which afford the most permanent characters should be resorted to, with a view to determine whether the subject ought to be considered only as a variety, or entitled

former of which ranks highest in estimation; but the more generally received and most probable opinion is, that this difference arises from the quality of the food, or from the water which they inhabit being impregnated with some substance capable of producing this effect. Certain it is, that their haunts, voracity, and modes of feeding, are every where alike." *Bainbridge.*

to rank as a species. In these examinations, the character of the internal organs also, and the number of the bones forming the vertebral column, should be ascertained. The normal number of vertebrae in *Salmo Fario*, our common trout, I believe to be fifty-six.

Mr. Neill, in his tour, has noticed the black-moss trout of Loch Knitching, and Loch Katrine is said to abound also with small black trout; an effect considered to be produced in some waters by receiving the drainings of boggy moors. In streams that flow rapidly over gravelly or rocky bottoms, the trout are generally remarkable for the brilliancy and beauty of their spots and colours. Trout are finest in appearance and flavour, from the end of May till towards the end of September;* an effect produced by the greater quantity and variety of nutritious food obtained during that period. Two specimens of the common trout taken early in January, were unusually fine in colour for that season of the year; their stomachs on examination were distended with ova of large size, which, from circumstances attending the capture of the trout, were known to be the roe

* Trout are in the best season in the Dove and other rivers where the May-fly is abundant, towards the end of June, or at the time when that fly disappears. The immense number of May-flies they consume during the three or four weeks those flies last is, of course, the chief cause.

of the bull-trout. The albuminous nature of this sort of food, which the trout availed themselves of, was believed to be the cause of their colour; since other trout procured at the same time from localities where no such food could be obtained, were of the usual dark colour of that season of the year.*

Mr. Stoddart, in his "Art of Angling as practised in Scotland," mentions an interesting experiment made with trout, some years ago, in the south of England, in order to ascertain the value of different food. "Fish were placed in three separate tanks, one of which was supplied daily with worms, another with live minnows, and the third with those small dark-coloured water-flies which are to be found moving about on the surface under banks and sheltered places. The trout fed with worms grew slowly, and had a lean appearance; those nourished on minnows, which, it was observed, they darted at with great voracity, became much larger; while such as were fattened upon flies only, attained, in a short time, prodigious dimensions, weighing twice as much as both the others

* "The colouring-matter is not in the scales, but in the surface of the skin immediately beneath them, and is probably a secretion easily affected by the health of the animal." *Sir H. Davy.*

together, although the quantity of food swallowed by them was in no wise so great." A common trout has been caught in the neighbourhood of Great Driffield, in September, 1832, which measured thirty-one inches in length, twenty-one in girth, and weighed seventeen pounds. A trout weighing twenty-five pounds was caught on the 11th January, 1822, in a little stream, ten feet wide, branching from the Avon, at the back of Castle-street, Salisbury. It was placed in a pond and fed, but it lived only four months, and had decreased in weight, at the time of its death, to twenty-one pounds and a quarter. The age to which trout may arrive, has not been ascertained. There are two instances on record; one of a trout having lived in a well at Dunbarton Castle, for twenty-eight years, and another of a trout that lived fifty-three years in a well in an orchard of Mr. William Mossop, of Board Hall, near Broughton-in-Furness. The Thames, at various places, produces trout of very large size. Among the best localities, may be named Kingston, opposite to the public-house called the Angler, Hampton-court bridge and weir, and the weirs at Shepperton and Chertsey.*

* "The art of fishing for trout from the tops of the weirs of the river Thames, is, I may venture to say, confined to

These large trout are objects of great attraction to some of the best London anglers, who unite a degree of skill and patience rarely to be exceeded. The most usual mode practised to deceive these experienced fish is, by trolling, or spinning with a small bleak, gudgeon, or minnow; and trout of fifteen pounds' weight are occasionally taken.

Some deep pools in the Thames above Oxford afford excellent trout, and some of them of very large size. We have before us a record of six, very few, and to those only who have been in the habit of practising it for a considerable length of time. It requires good tackle, great skill, and some nerve. A bungler would even find it difficult to put a bleak properly on a set of the hooks which are used in Thames trout-fishing, so as to make it spin as it ought to do. The angler sits or stands on the top of the piles of the weir, the foaming water rushing through them with great force and noise. The torrent then forms eddies and little whirlpools in the basin below, and from which, as the water expands itself, it again resumes its calm and stately movement. In the position I have described, the angler has to cast his line into the foaming basin, and this a skilful practitioner will do to a distance of from thirty to forty yards. The great art, however, is in gathering up the line properly in the hand for a second cast, so that it may not become entangled, or be checked in its progress. When the position of the angler is considered, this is no easy task, especially as the loss of his balance might precipitate him into the torrent below."

Jesse's Rambles.

The most celebrated Thames anglers are, Mr. G. Marshall, of Brewer Street, London; Mr. Cox, of Bermondsey; Sir Hyde Parker, Wm. Whitbread and Ed. Mills, Esquires, and Mr. Bachelor, of Windsor; and Mr. Goodman, of Hampton Court.

taken by minnow-spinning, which weighed together fifty-four pounds, the largest of them thirteen pounds. Few persons are aware of the difficulty of taking a trout when it has attained twelve or fourteen pounds' weight, and it is very seldom that one of this size is hooked and landed except by a first-rate fisherman: such a fish, when in good condition, is considered a present worthy of a place at a royal table. Among performances in trout-catching, the following may be mentioned, as found in the MS. of the late Colonel Montagu: "Mr. Popham, of Littlecot, in the county of Wilts, was famous for a trout fishery. They were confined to a certain portion of a river by grating, so that fish of a moderate size could not escape. To the preserving and fattening of these fish, much trouble and expense were devoted, and fish of seven and eight pounds' weight were not uncommon. A gentleman at Lackham, in the same county, had a favourite water-spaniel, that was condemned to suffer death for killing all the carp in his master's ponds, but was reprieved at the desire of Mr. Popham, who took charge of him, in the belief that so shy and so swift a fish as a trout, was not to be caught by a dog. However, in this he was mistaken, for the dog soon convinced him that his largest trout were not a match for him."

The following description of a trout is taken from a fish of twelve inches in length. The length of the head, compared to the length of the head and body, not including the caudal-rays, was as one to four; the depth of the body, rather more than the length of the head; the dorsal-fin commenced half-way between the point of the nose and the commencement of the upper caudal-rays; the third ray of the dorsal-fin, which is the longest, longer than the base of the fin: the origin of the adipose-fin, half-way between the commencement of the dorsal-fin and the end of the upper half of the tail; the pectoral-fin, two-thirds of the length of the head; the ventral-fins under the middle of the dorsal-fin, and half-way between the origin of the pectoral-fin, and the end of the base of the anal-fin; the anal-fin begins half-way between the origin of the ventral-fin, and the commencement of the inferior caudal-rays. The tail but slightly forked, and growing slowly up to square in old fish, or even very slightly convex. The fin-rays in number are —

D. 14: P. 14: V. 9: A. 11: C. 19.

Vertebræ 56.

The form of the head blunt; the eye large, placed one diameter and a half from the end of

the nose; the irides silvery, with a tinge of pink: the lower jaw in the *Salmonidæ* appears to be the longest when the mouth is opened, but it shuts within the upper jaw when the mouth is closed; the teeth, numerous, strong, and curving inwards, extending along the whole length of the vomer; the convexity of the dorsal and ventral outline nearly similar; the colour of the back and upper part of the sides made up of numerous dark-reddish-brown spots on a yellow-brown ground; eleven or twelve bright-red spots along the lateral line, with a few other red spots above and below the line; the lower part of the sides, golden yellow; belly and under surface silvery white; the spots on the sides liable to great variation in number, size, and colour; dorsal-fin and tail light brown, with numerous darker brown spots; the adipose fin brown, frequently with one or two darker brown spots, and edged with red; the pectoral, ventral, and anal fins, uniform pale-orange brown. The number of scales in a row above and beneath the lateral line, about twenty-five. Deformed trout are not uncommon; mention of them, as occurring in some of the lakes of Wales, is made by Pennant, Oliver, and Hansard. "In 1829," says the writer of the article on Angling, in the 7th edition of the *Encyclopædia Britan-*

nica, “we received some very singular trouts from a small lock called Lockdow, near Pitmain, in Inverness-shire. Their heads were short and round, and their upper-jaws were truncated, like that of a bull-dog. They do not occur in any of the neighbouring locks, and have not been observed beyond the weight of half a pound.” Such a trout from Lockdow was presented to the museum of the Zoological Society by the Honble. Twiselton Fiennes. Walton says, that “a man should not in honesty catch a trout till the middle of March;” but we think that time too early, at least by a fortnight; and we seldom or never knew a trout under ordinary circumstances in tolerable season before the middle of April, or after the middle of September. The period between is the right and proper season to angle for trout, and the only bait we cordially recommend is the fly, the minnow, and the loach.

CHAPTER X.

ON THE NATURE, HABITS, AND ORGANISATION
OF THE GRAYLING.

SALMO THYMALLUS.

THE chapter we are about to write on this gracefully-shaped fish, will be chiefly compiled from the same source to which we are indebted for the previous one. The grayling, though abundant in some streams, is yet a very local fish. Similar, in many respects, to the trout in its habits and wants; there are numbers

of rivers abounding with trout, that do not produce grayling. In the southern counties of Hampshire and Wiltshire, the grayling is found in the Test and both the Avons. In Herefordshire, in the Dove, the Lug, the Wye, and the Irvon. In Shropshire, in the Teme and the Clun. In Staffordshire, in the Hodder, the Trent, the Dove, the Churnet, and the Wye. In Derbyshire, in the Dove. In Merionetshire, in the Dee, between Curwen and Bala. In Nottinghamshire, in the Trent. In Lancashire, in the Ribble. In Yorkshire, in the Derwent, the Ure, the Wharfe, and the Wiske, near Northallerton. Dr. Heysham says, it is occasionally taken in the Eden and the Esk in Cumberland. It is also found in several of the minor streams of nearly all the above-mentioned counties. It is not found, that we are aware, either in Ireland or Scotland; Mr. Low, however, includes this fish in his *Fauna Orcadensis*, and it is known to be plentiful in Sweden, Norway, and Lapland. It is found in France, Germany, and in the northern parts of Italy. The peculiarity of the local distribution in this country gave rise to the supposition, that the grayling had been originally introduced by the monks, as a fish worth cultivating; many of the rivers containing grayling being near the remains of great mon-

asteries.* But two circumstances affect this solution: it would be very difficult to bring this fish alive from the continent to this country; and it is not found in the rivers of Kent, Dorsetshire, Devonshire, or Cornwall, where monastic establishments were formerly numerous.

The grayling thrives best in rivers with rocky or gravelly bottoms, and seems to require an alternation of stream and pool. According to Sir Humphrey Davy, who has given a good history of the grayling in his "*Salmonia*," this fish was introduced into the Test, in Hampshire, from the Avon; and the former river, in particular parts, appears to suit it the better of the two. Large grayling are, however, occasionally taken in both these waters, which are particularly resorted to by the southern anglers. Three graylings, weighing together twelve pounds, were caught by Thomas Lister Parker, Esq. in the Avon, near Ringwood. A grayling of four and a half pounds' weight has been killed in the Test; and one of five pounds is recorded to have been

* We think the monks,

"If ancient tales say true, nor wrong these holy men,"

better judges in matters of gastronomy than to take any trouble about the introduction of a fish in every respect inferior to the indigenous trout.

caught near Shrewsbury. However fastidious in the quality of the water or the choice of situation in the stream the grayling is known to be, experiment has proved, that this fish will live in ponds that have been newly made in hard soil; or in such as have been very recently and carefully cleaned out; but in these situations the grayling does not breed, and they will not continue to live in old muddy ponds. The ova of this fish are numerous, large, and of a deep-orange colour; the spawning season is in April, or the beginning of May; in this respect differing from the other *Salmonidæ*, most, if not all, of which spawn towards the end of the year, and generally in cold weather. The grayling, however, is in the finest condition in October and November,* when trout are out of season, not having then recovered the effects of their recent spawning, while the young grayling of that year are about seven inches in length.

The food of the grayling, as ascertained by examination, besides the various flies — imitations of which are successfully used by anglers — consists also of the larvæ of *Phryganea*, *Ephemera*, and *Libellula*; the remains of the cases of the former, and the tough

* The only reason why the “with-well-capon-lined” monks should have imported them.

skins of all of them, being frequently found in their stomachs. We have found also, several small shells, examples of the *Physa* and *Neritina fluvialis*. Dead shells and small pebbles are also found; but whether these last are taken up by the fish to serve any useful purpose, as in the stomachs of gallinaceous birds, or have only formed part of the case of the *Phryganea*, may be questioned. Some English authors have considered the grayling a migratory fish, passing the winter in the sea, and the summer in fresh water. "Early in spring," says Mr. Donovan, "they ascend the rivers, where they remain till autumn, and then return to their former element." This may apply to grayling on some parts of the European continent,* but is not the case certainly with our fish in this country, in the rivers of which it is found in the most perfect condition, and, in consequence, most eagerly sought after in October and November. We have caught grayling in the Dove on the 27th of March this year — the very day on the evening of which we are now writing — between Norbury and Rocester, and though small ones — not exceeding three quarters of a pound in weight — some of them

* Block says the grayling descends to the Baltic in autumn.

were in the very highest perfection. Their flavour was equal to that of trout of the same size, and the colour of the outward surface of the flesh of several of them, was a beautiful pink. The day was sun-shiny, without a cloud, and the fly they all took was the March-brown. However, the finest specimens we ever saw, were taken in November; and Sir H. Davy states in his "*Salmonia*," he had proved that the grayling of England would not bear even a brackish water without dying.

The term *Thymallus* is said to have been bestowed upon this fish, on account of the peculiar odour it emits when fresh from the water, which is said to resemble that of thyme; and from its agreeable colour, as well as smell, St. Ambrose is recorded to have called the grayling the flower of fishes. To be eaten in perfection, it cannot be dressed too soon after it is taken from the water, and it should be handled as delicately and as little as possible. The name grayling is supposed to be a modification of the words gray-lines, in reference to the dusky longitudinal bars along the body. It has been considered, that the large dorsal-fin of the grayling enabled it to rise and sink rapidly in deep pools; but this power would rather seem to be afforded by the large size of the swimming-bladder. The very large dorsal-

fin, compared to the small size of all the other fins, renders the grayling unable to stem rapid currents; they are much more prone to go down stream than up, and are never seen leaping at a fall like trout.

In a grayling of ten inches long, the length of the head is to the body alone as one to four; the depth of the body rather more than equal to the length of the head: from the point of the nose to the commencement of the dorsal-fin, is equal to one-third of the length of the whole fish, to the end of the fleshy portion of the tail; the posterior edge of the dorsal-fin, half-way between the point of the nose and the end of the longest caudal-rays; the adipose fin, rather nearer the dorsal-fin than the end of the tail: the height of the dorsal-fin, equal to half the height of the body, the first ray short, the next five increasing gradually in length; the sixth ray, nearly as long as the seventh, and, as well as the five anterior rays, articulated and simple; the seventh ray, and all the rays behind it, articulated, branched, and nearly of the same height; the length of the base of the fin, not equal to twice the length of its longest ray: the pectoral fin, small, narrow, and pointed: the ventral fins commencing in a vertical line under the middle of the dorsal-fin; the anal fin commences half-way

between the origin of the ventral-fin, and the end of the fleshy portion of the tail, and ends on the same plane as the adipose-fin above it; the longest ray but little longer than the base of the fin. The tail forked; the middle rays rather more than half as long as the longest. The fin-rays in number are —

D. 20: P. 15: V. 10: A. 13: C. 20.

Vertebræ 58.

The head is small and pointed, flattened at the top; the breadth of the eye equal to one-fourth of the length of the whole head; irides golden-yellow, pupil blue, pear-shaped, the apex directed forward: the opening of the mouth, when viewed in front, square; the teeth small, incurved, numerous, none on the tongue, and only a few on the most anterior part of the vomer: behind the head, the nape and back rise suddenly; the body deepest at the commencement of the dorsal-fin, then tapering off to the tail; abdominal line but slightly convex; the scales rather large; the lateral line in the middle of the body not very conspicuous, with seven rows of scales on an oblique line above it, and seven rows below it; the sides marked with about fifteen dusky

longitudinal bands. The general colour of the body, light-yellow brown, beautifully varied with golden, copper, green, and blue reflections, when viewed in different lights, with a few decided dark spots: the head brown; on the cheeks and gill-covers a tinge of blue: all the fins somewhat darker than the colour of the body; the dorsal-fin varied with square dusky spots on the membrane between the rays, the upper part of the fin spotted and streaked with reddish brown. The grayling appears to become darker by age, and the pectoral fins are reddish about spawning time, with small black spots.

The chapters Sir H. Davy has written so carefully about this fish will, if judiciously condensed, be found useful and interesting to our readers. They contain much that relates to the natural history of the fish, and to the mode of angling for it. Leintwardine, near Ludlow, was a favourite piscatory resort of Sir Humphrey's, and he is of opinion, that there is no stream in England more productive of grayling than that water is. The Dove would be, were it not for those infernal prowlers, the poachers of the neighbourhood of Ashborne. The grayling requires a number of circumstances in a river, to enable it to multiply. The Dove possesses those circumstances, namely, a tem-

perature in the water which is moderate — neither too high nor too low. Grayling are never found in streams that run from glaciers — at least near their source; and they are killed by cold or heat. Sir Humphrey put some grayling from the Teme, in September, with some trout, into a confined water, rising from a spring in the yard at Dowton; the grayling all died, but the trout lived. And in the hot summer of 1825, great numbers of large grayling died in the Avon, below Ringwood, without doubt killed by the heat in July. In the northern European countries, char are always found in the highest and coldest waters; the trout, in the brooks rising in the highest and coldest mountains; and the grayling always lower, where the temperature is milder; and, if in hot countries, only at the foot of mountains, not far from sources which have the mean temperature of the atmosphere. Besides temperature, grayling require a peculiar character in the disposition of the water of rivers. They do not dwell, like trout, in rapid, shallow, torrents; nor, like char or chub, in deep pools or lakes. They require a combination of stream and pool; they like a deep still pool for rest, and a rapid stream above, and a gradually declining shallow below, and a bottom where marl or loam is mixed with gravel; and they are not found abundant ex-

cept in rivers that have these characters. There must be a succession of deep still pools under shady banks of marl, with gentle rapids above, and a long shelving tail, where the fish sport and feed. If there are no such pools in a river, grayling will remain, provided the water be clear, and will breed; but they cannot stem rapid streams, and they are gradually carried down lower and lower, and at last disappear.

The trout, in all its habits of migration, runs upward, seeking the fresh and cool waters of mountain sources to spawn in: the grayling, we believe, has never the same habit of running up stream; we never saw one leaping at a fall, where trout are so often seen. When a grayling is hooked he very rarely jumps, as a trout does, out of the water to shake off the hook, but he descends to below mid-water, and there struggles stoutly to get free, and is by no means what Cotton calls him, "one of the dearest-hearted fishes in the world." However, if the grayling happen to be hooked sharply in any of the bones of the upper jaw, he will, and so will most fish under a similar circumstance, at the first prick throw himself two or three feet from out the water. The large back fin seems intended to enable him to rise and sink rapidly in deep pools; and the slender nature of the body, towards the tail,

renders the grayling much more unfit for leaping cataracts than the trout and salmon. The temperature of the water, and its character as to still and stream, seem of more importance than clearness; for grayling have been taken in streams that are almost constantly turbid, as in the Inn and the Salza in the Tyrol. This fish appears to require food of a particular kind, feeding much upon flies and their larvæ, and not usually preying upon small fish, as the trout. We recollect, however, that a gentleman of the name of Powell, who resided for some time in the neighbourhood of Ashborne, and who always fished with a minnow, was in the constant habit of catching large grayling with that bait. He has been known to catch of a day, by spinning the minnow, four grayling each upwards of a pound and a half in weight. The grayling has a very strong stomach, almost approaching to that of the gillaroo trout, and is exceedingly fond of those larvæ which inhabit cases, and which, usually covered with sand or gravel, require a strong membranous stomach to enable the extraneous matter to be separated. In accordance with their general habits of feeding, grasshoppers are amongst their usual food in the end of summer and autumn; and at all seasons, maggots, upon fine tackle and a small hook, offer a

secure mode of taking them — the pool having been previously baited for the purpose of angling, by throwing in a handful or two a few minutes before. Prepared salmon spawn or roe is, apparently on account of the strong fishy smell it emits, an excellent bait for grayling.

In fishing for grayling, you may use as many as four flies at a time on your casting-line; for that fish lies deeper, and is not so shy a fish as the trout, and, provided the gut be fine, is not apt to be scared by the cast of the flies on the water. Very slender transparent gut of the colour of the water, is one of the most important causes of success in grayling fishing. A trout generally lies near the surface of the water, and sucks in the flies as they sail down by him, which a grayling scarcely ever does. He rises rapidly from the bottom or middle of the water — on the contrary — darting upwards; and having seized his fly, sinks rapidly to his station. This habit, however, is not invariable; for we have sometimes seen trout feed like grayling, and *vice versa*; but neither of these fish emits bubbles of air in rising, as dace and chub do. In playing the grayling, it is necessary to use a very light hand, and never to play him against the stream if it be at all rapid; for the flesh of the mouth is extremely tender

— we may say brittle — and unless the hook catch through the lip, it is more than an equal chance that he will escape you.

The habits of the grayling, like those of most other fish, are very simple. He is, to a certain extent, gregarious; more so than the trout, and less so than the perch. He is in the highest or most perfect season, at the end of November or beginning of December, when his back is very dark, almost black, and his belly and lower fins almost gold-coloured; but his brightness, like that of most other fishes, depends a good deal upon the nature of the water. In many rivers of the continent, the grayling is far more brilliantly coloured than in England; the lower part almost a bright orange, and the back fin approaching the colour of the damask rose, or rather of an anemoné. The grayling spawns in April, and sometimes as late as the beginning of May; the female is generally then followed by two or three males. She deposits her ova in the tails of sharp streams, and the males, rubbing against her, shed upon the ova the milt or seminal fluid. It has not been ascertained with certainty how long a time is required for the exclusion of the young ones; but in the end of July, or beginning of August, they are of the size of sprats, four or five inches long, and already sport merrily at a

fly. The grayling hatched in May or June, become the same year, in September or October, nine or ten inches long, and weigh from half a pound to ten ounces;* and the year after, they are from twelve to fifteen inches long, and weigh from three-quarters to a pound; and these two sizes are the fish that most usually rise at the fly. The grayling may be fished for at all times, since he is rarely so much out of season as to be a bad fish, and when there are flies on the water, will generally take them; but as the trout may be considered as a spring and summer fish, so the grayling may be looked upon as an autumnal and winter fish. Grayling are taken in spring with the same imitation of flies as the trout; and, as far as flies are concerned, these two species feed alike, though it may generally be taken for granted, that the grayling prefers smaller flies; and the varieties of the ephemeræ or phryganæ, of the smallest size, form their favourite food. Yet grayling do not refuse

* This statement is made on the authority of Sir H. Davy; but, although his opinion is supported by that of Mr. Yarrell, we think that he attributes a too rapid growth to the grayling. How is it that so many fish of this species are caught under the weight of six ounces each in February and March? Surely they ought to have increased in bulk during the quarter of a year that intervened between those latter months and the previous October. The growth of this fish is not yet positively known.

large flies, and the stone-fly, the May-fly, and even moths, are greedily taken in the summer by large fish of this species. Flies, likewise, that do not inhabit the water, but are blown from the land, are likewise good baits for grayling. There is no method more killing, for large grayling, than applying a grasshopper to the point of a leaded hook, the lead and shank of which are covered with green and yellow silk, to imitate the body of the animal. This mode of fishing is called sinking and drawing. We have seen it practised with as much success as maggot-fishing; and the fish taken were all of the largest size; the method being most successful in deep holes, where the bottom was not visible, which are the natural haunts of such fish. In the very depth of winter grayling rise for an hour or two, in bright and tolerably warm weather; and at this time, the smallest imitations of black or pale gnats that can be made, on the smallest-sized hook, succeed best in taking them. In March the dark-bodied willow-fly may be regarded as the earliest fly; the imitation of which is made by dark-claret dubbing and a dun-hackle, or short fibres from the starling's feather for wings. This fly has four small wings, and we have seen it on the water early in the cold March of the very backward and bleak spring of the present

year. The blue-dun comes on in the middle of the day in this month, and is imitated by dun-hackles for wings and legs, and an olive dubbing for body. In mild weather, in morning and evening in this month, and through April, the green-tail, or grannom, comes on in great quantities, and is well imitated by a hen pheasant's wing-feather, a gray or red hackle for legs, and a dark peacock's herl, or dark hare's ear fur, for body. The same kind of fly, of a larger size, with paler wings, kills well in the evening through May and June. The imitation of a water insect called the spider-fly, with a lead-coloured body and woodcock's wings, is a killing bait towards the end of April and the beginning of May. A dark fly, imitated by a dark-shaded pheasant's wing, black hackle for legs, and a peacock's herl, ribbed with red silk, for the body, is greedily taken in May and June. At this season, and in July, imitations of the black and red palmer worms, which we believe are taken for black, or brown, or red beetles, or cockchafers, kill well; and, in dark weather, there are usually very light duns on the water. In August, imitations of the house-fly and blue-bottle, and the red and black ant-fly, are taken, and are particularly killing after floods in autumn, when great quantities of the fly are destroyed and washed down the

river. In this month, on cloudy days, pale-blue duns frequently appear; and they are still more common in September. Throughout the summer and autumn, on fine calm evenings, a large dun fly, with a pale-yellow body, is greedily taken by grayling after sunset; and a good imitation is, consequently, very killing. In the end of October, and through November, there is no fly-fishing but in the middle of the day, when imitations of the smaller duns may be used with success; the best sport is to be obtained, in bright sunshine, from twelve till half-past two o'clock. Grayling, if you take your station by the side of a river, will rise nearer to you than trout, for they lie deeper, and, therefore, are not so readily scared by an object on the bank; but they are more delicate in the choice of their flies than trout, and will much oftener rise and refuse the fly. Trout, from lying nearer the surface, are generally taken before grayling, where the water is slightly coloured, or after a flood; and in rain trout usually rise better than grayling, though it sometimes happens, when great quantities of flies come out in rain, grayling, as well as trout, are taken with more certainty than at any other time; the artificial fly, in such cases, looks like a wet fly, and allures even the grayling, that

generally is more difficult to deceive than trout in the same river.

Never wishing to quote an author, or borrow from him without acknowledgment, we will remind the reader, that most of the remarks comprised in the preceding pages are extracted from various parts of Sir H. Davy's *Salmonia*. We will now lay before the reader some curious observations communicated to Mr. Jesse, by a gentleman residing on the banks of the Teme. The said gentleman communicates them in a tone of the most confident authority, and as some of them are in direct variance with the opinions of Sir H. Davy and Mr. Yarrell, and as others run diametrically counter to our notions of grayling-fishing, we will, putting them into the smallest possible space, write them down, to the end that both sides of the question may be fairly heard. The gentleman in question, says, "Any person who has ever fished in a grayling river, will remember that there are three very distinct sizes of fish: the pink, so called, I imagine, from its not much exceeding the minnow in size; the shett, or shote, which average about five to the pound; and the half-pound fish, which then takes the name of '*grayling*.' Now, as I have myself constantly caught all these several kinds on

the same day, and that in the month of October; and it is allowed by all, that grayling spawn in April, or at latest in May; if all these fish are the produce of the same year, how can you account for the great difference in size? And yet Sir Humphrey affirms, that the fish spawned in April, in the October of the same year attain the weight of half a pound, or even ten ounces! Leaving this for more competent judges to determine, I will now state the common opinion, to which I confess I am much more inclined than the other. It is, that the pink-grayling are the fry of the present year; the shett, of the year preceding; and, therefore, instead of being a fish of rapid growth, that a grayling of more than half a pound is a fish of nearly two years of age, and up to which time they do not spawn.*

“ During the whole of August, and up to the middle of September in this summer [1833], the weather was so sultry, and the water so low and fine, that all our country anglers fancied it was useless to attempt to kill fish. The consequence was, I had the river [Teme] very

* Very probable. We have caught several grayling this spring. Those of half a pound and under had no spawn in them — the larger ones were full of it, and the eggs in a state of large developement.

much to myself; and by using very fine tackle, and wading under bushes where the fish had probably never even seen an artificial fly, I had capital sport, seldom failing to fill my basket, which holds about seventeen pounds of fish. I usually fished with three flies, the red-ant, fern, and orange-tail;* and I will venture to back them during those two months against all the combinations of feather, fur, and silk, ever put together. And now having given you a hint about flies, I will tell you a secret or two about making use of them, which is of much greater importance. You will always see any person who is a stranger to grayling fishing, and I may add, many who have fished for them all their lives, when the water is very low and clear, immediately betake themselves to the streams and curls, from the idea that the fish will see your line in the dead water. Let them do so; they will perhaps catch a few trout, and some shett grayling. But go yourself to a deep, dead part of the river, never mind if there is *no wind*, or if the *sun* is *hot*; use the finest gut you can procure (even if you give a guinea a knot for it), and two flies; and when you have thrown your line as light as gossamer, let

* Body, green dubbing, mixed with a little yellow; a tuft of orange silk or worsted for tail; made buzz with light-blue hackle.

it sink for eight or ten inches. You will not see a rise, but a slight curl in the water, which by little practice you will understand quite as well, and when you strike, you will have the pleasure of finding a *pounder* or more tugging away at the end of your line. This is the *real* secret in grayling-fishing; and I have often filled my basket, while eight or ten other fishermen on the water, using the very same flies, have not managed to kill a decent dish amongst them all."

This method of fishing for grayling in still water by sinking the flies, is also recommended by the Editor of the *Literary Gazette* as a killing way for trout. That celebrated writer says, "We have dragged out fine trout as fast as we could throw our line, when the fly, from their incessant biting, was reduced to the bare hook, and the hackle-feather fastened merely at the shank. A very favourite and successful practice of ours was, to fish in a part of the river where others seldom thought of, in the *dead still water*, imitating a drowned fly, and using very fine tackle: here we have filled our baskets with the best trout, whilst others have thrashed the stream in vain."

It would be quite unpardonable in us to give the lie direct to the assertions of those gentlemen, particularly when they relate to facts

performed by themselves. But we must say that we have hundreds of times, with the finest tackle ever knotted together, and the best flies that human fingers could dress, tried the method of fishing in dead still water, recommended by them, and we never in any single instance found it attended even with the shadow of success. Fish then, impartial reader, after both fashions, for trial' sake, and for your own satisfaction, and inform us at the end of the season whether you have killed more fish in "dead still water" — in a "deep, dead part of the river, when there is no wind and when the sun is hot" — or in streams, eddies, and curls, and in deeps, when the wind, piping on them, has made them alive, and the lowering clouds have stripped them of their transparency. We will stake our reputation on your judgment.

We will conclude this chapter — which we fancy a tolerably complete one — on the grayling, by giving a short extract from the common father of us all — quaintly poetical Izaak Walton. It is a very fair specimen of the old gentleman's style, and not an unflattering portrait of our pretty friend, the grayling. "The umber*

* "The title of *U'mber* appears to be derived from the Latin *Umbra*, a shadow, which the rapidity of its motions authorises, inasmuch as, when swimming, it darts with

and grayling are thought by some to differ as the herring and pilchard do. But though they may do so in other nations, I think those in England differ nothing but in their names. Aldrovandus says, they be of a trout kind; and Gesner says, that in his country, which is Switzerland, he is accounted the choicest of all fish. And in Italy, he is, in the month of May, so highly valued, that he is sold at a much higher rate than any other fish. The French, which call the chub *un vilain*, call the umber of the lake Lemane *un umble chevalier*;* and they value the umber or grayling so highly, that they say he feeds on gold; and say, that many have been caught out of their famous river of Loire, out of whose bellies grains of gold have been often taken. And some think that he feeds on water-thyme, and smells of it at his first taking out of the water; and they may think so with as good reason as we do that our smelts smell like violets at their first being caught,

such velocity as to give the semblance to the eye of the flitting of a shadow, rather than the actual movement of an animated substance." *Bainbridge.*

* A not unfanciful aristocratic distinction, as supposing that elegance of shape, tenderness of flesh, and delicacy of complexion imply gentility of race. It may have been so in the olden time; but since money and nobility have been crossed, neither little white ears, nor little white hands, are the "distinctive die" of a sixteen-quartered escutcheon.

which I think is a truth. Aldrovandus says, the salmon, the grayling, and trout, and all fish that live in clear and sharp streams are made by their mother Nature of such exact shape and pleasant colours, purposely to invite us to a joy and contentedness in feasting with her. Whether this is a truth or not it is not my purpose to dispute : but 'tis certain, all that write of the umber declare him to be very medicinal. And Gesner says, that the fat of an umber or grayling, being set with a little honey, a day or two in the sun, in a little glass, is very excellent against redness, or swarthy, or any thing that breeds in the eyes. Salviani takes him to be called umber from his swift swimming or gliding out of sight, more like a shadow or a ghost than a fish. Much more might be said both of his smell and taste ; but I shall only tell you, that St. Ambrose, the glorious Bishop of Milan, who lived when the church kept fasting-days, calls him the flower-fish, or flower of fishes ; and that he was so far in love with him, that he would not let him pass without the honour of a long discourse. He is of a very fine shape, his flesh is white, his teeth, those little ones that he has, are in his throat, yet he has so tender a mouth, that he is oftener lost after an angler has hooked him than any other fish. Though there be many of these

fishes in the delicate river Dove, and in Trent, and some other smaller rivers, as that which runs by Salisbury, yet he is not so general a fish as the trout, nor to me so good to eat or to angle for. And so I shall take my leave of him."



CHAPTER XI.

ON TROLLING, DIBBING, OR DAPING, &c.

WE will confess, that though we are about to write a chapter on minnow-spinning, we do not sit down to do so with much inward satisfaction, for it is a mode of fishing that we are not over-attached to, and it is one which we never practise, unless when we absolutely want a dish of trout. Generally speaking, however, it is decidedly the most killing mode of taking trout, and, perhaps, the only way of catching the largest fish of that species. The picturesque observation of Walton is true, "that a large trout will come as fiercely at a minnow, as the highest-mettled hawk doth seize on a partridge, or a greyhound on a hare." Now, so unaccountable are the tastes of men, that we are not unwilling to subject ourselves to the charge of, in this one instance, lack of judgment; for we cannot prevent ourselves from avowing, that one of our objections to the use of the minnow is, that

it is too sure a bait. Absolute certainty in the pursuit of game destroys the keenness of enjoyment, when success depends, in no way, upon chance. Minnow-fishing may be compared to playing at whist with the four honours always in your hand. It has, however, several advantages over fly-fishing. It depends little on the state of the weather, and can be pursued with equal success on cloudy or bright days, when there is wind or when there is none. It matters little from what point of the compass the wind blows; it may blow on your right hand or your left, from your back, or in your teeth, it cannot prevent you from throwing your minnow how and where you please. Minnow-fishing requires not that peculiar state of the water so requisite for fly-fishing; the water may be discoloured, or it may be as clear as crystal, still the minnow will be found deadly in either condition — it may be curled into rough waves by the wind, or it may be smooth and unruffled as a mirror, the minnow-fisher regards it not. Neither does he much heed the obstruction of trees, roots, or rocks; — his tackle is strong, and there is very little fear, unless he be very clumsy indeed, that he should lose it. He is not troubled about playing a fish; with his long and powerful rod and strong

line, he hauls the helpless fish ashore with as much ease as a steam-vessel tows after it a cock-boat. All that delicacy of hand — all that excitement from the moment a fish is hooked until he is safely landed — all that care in playing a fish which accompanies the fly-fisher, is unknown to the minnow-fisher. He spins his minnow, hooks his fish firmly, and every danger is over! He is a John-Bull fisher—he builds not upon sand—his calculation is that of positive gain—he coolly smiles at the poesy of fly-fishing—he is a down-right matter-of-fact prose personage—he is right, and we are wrong. Be it so. We had rather err with Plato than. . . . We forget the rest of the quotation, and, perhaps, for certain reasons, it is as well we do. There are persons, notwithstanding, of that happy versatility of talent and disposition, who, whilst they practise minnow-fishing with extreme success, and understand it to perfection, are equally versed in fly-fishing, and have taste and imagination enough to consider it the more agreeable, and by far the less exceptionable of the two modes of angling for trout. A gentleman — aye, every inch a gentleman — of the latter character — Maitland Dashwood, Esq. — kindly taught us that mode of trolling with the minnow, which, as we con-

sider it the best, we will proceed to communicate to our readers.

The gentleman above alluded to, and whose name we take the liberty without permission of making use of — not indeed to do honour to him, but to ourselves, and for that reason, we are confident, he will pardon our presumption, fishes with the minnow, in the following very simple manner. He uses a rod twenty-two feet long. The different joints from but to top are all made of stained and varnished bamboo cane. It tapers far less deeply than a fly-rod, and is consequently stiffer and less pliant. However, towards the top it possesses sufficient elasticity to allow the person who uses it to direct the bait and line in the direction he chooses, and when playing a large fish to throw the strain on the but-end. The rings on it are large, made of brass-wire, and stand upright; the last position being of absolute necessity on all rods used for trolling. The line is full eighty yards long, and it is made of silk very strongly plaited. It is, however, in thickness, not more substantial than a common fly-line, but it is far stronger on account of the force that must have been used in plaiting it and reducing it to so small a volume. It is thickly varnished — an excellent invention, which prevents the line from being injured by

any sort of humidity, hinders it from tangling when coiled loosely on the ground, and preserves to it that rigidity which is necessary to make it slip freely and rapidly through the rings during the operation of throwing. The reel is a simple Irish click one, of rather large dimensions — being remarkably deep, but not wide, and rather stiff in its play. A rod, line, and reel of this description is fit for every mode of trolling — whether for trout, pike, or salmon*.

The usual methods of placing the minnow on the hook are by far too complicated. The one we are about to explain is not only free from any such objection, but is extremely neat and simple. Three hooks (size, No. 7, Redditch) long in the shank, and pointed at its end, are to be soldered back to back, so as to form a hook of triple bend and barb. Those hooks are to be of bright steel — that is, they are to be chosen before they undergo the process that turns them blue. They are to be whipped on a looped link of gut, of fine and strong quality, of the length of about twelve inches. The loop of this gut is placed in the eye of a darning-needle;

* Mr. Dashwood informs us, that in his piscatory excursions in Scotland, he is extremely successful in taking salmon, trolling for them as he does here for trout, except, that instead of the minnow he uses a young herring, of four or five inches long, for a bait.

a little cut having been previously made in the eye for the purpose of admitting the gut, and the point of the needle is introduced at the vent of the minnow, and drawn out through its mouth until the hooks are arrested by their bend at the vent. The loop of the gut is next passed through a little hole in the head of a short piece of lead — about an inch long, and just thick enough to fill the orifice of the minnow's mouth, and the lead is then passed down the gut and fixed in the mouth and belly of the bait. The whole is then looped to a gut-line of about two yards in length, having two swivels on it, the first distant from the bait about fourteen inches, and the second about a foot and a half from that. This tackle is looped to the reel-line, and you are prepared for casting. Before the cast is made, the distance you have to throw is to be calculated, and line sufficient to reach it is to be freed from the reel and allowed to drop in coils upon the ground. The rod is then to be grasped with both hands, one above the reel and the other below it, and the bait is to be swung to the point you wish it to reach. As soon as the bait sinks in the water, lower the rod to within about two feet of the surface, and keeping constantly drawing your line with your left hand towards you, and between the interval of each draw, move the rod shortly and sharply

backwards from the direction in which your bait is. When the bait is hauled home, repeat the cast. It is never necessary to strike at a fish; the constant motion given to the minnow in spinning it this way is quite sufficient to hook him. The common advice of making the minnow spin against the stream is erroneous. Spin it with the stream, and invariably do so when the weather is clear and the water low. When you fish a stream, stand at its tail, and fling your minnow towards the head of the current on that side nearest you. Repeat your casts until you have fished the stream from you across to the other side. If after half a dozen casts there is no run, proceed to another situation. When the water is discoloured and full, you may fish the stream in whatsoever direction you like, either against the current or with it; the same advice is applicable to fishing in pools when ruffled by the breeze. The best fish are caught in clear and rapid streams immediately before, during, and just after the drake-season.

A second very excellent way to bait with the minnow is, to use six hooks; they must be rather small ones — say No. 5 Kendal — and they must be bright, and without the usual blue polish. The first hook is to have a small bit of lead looped on to the gut near where that hook is tied; about half an inch lower

down, soldered or brazed together back to back, three hooks are to be attached, and half an inch further on, a double hook is to be tied. Insert the bit of lead in the minnow's mouth, and close it by passing the first hook through the lips of the bait; insert one of the barbs of the triple hook on the right-side of the back of the bait, at about a quarter of an inch on the head-side of the back-fin; and on the same side of the bait, half way between the ventral-fin and the tail, fasten one part of the double hook. The shanks of the hooks are to be lapped with silver tinsel, in order that every part of them may correspond with the silvery colour of the minnow's belly. Two swivels are to be used as before directed. In trolling for trout let your minnows be of middling size, and carry them with you alive in a small tin minnow-can. Before you put them on the hooks, kill them by passing a needle through the spine just over the upper ends of the gill-covers. A minnow that has been long dead will never spin well on account of its stiffness. We are acquainted with several other modes of baiting with the minnow, but those two we have given are decidedly the best, and we think it, in consequence, perfect waste of time to give any more.

Trolling for Pike: — Use a rod, line, and reel, similar to those recommended for minnow-spinning. They will be found quite strong enough. Let your hooks be of the same number, and tied on in the same way, as we pointed out in our second way of baiting with a minnow. The hooks must be the best-tempered perch-hooks of the largest size, and instead of being tied half an inch distant from each other, the distance must be a full inch. Instead of gut use strong gimp. Let your bait be a good-sized fresh-killed gudgeon. Heed not the advice of others, it is, after all, the surest bait for pike. Make your gudgeon spin exactly as you do the minnow, but never fish streams or fast-running waters. If you do, you will take only very small jacks. The large ones lie in the deep waters, and are to be found in the vicinity of weeds and the different species of large water-plants. The safest way is, to allow the fish a few moments' time to gorge your bait, and then strike him obliquely either to the right or left, as occasion may suggest to you. Give him no play, hold him strongly "under buckle," wind up rapidly, and land him without mercy or delay. He is a ruthless tyrant, and he should be pitilessly treated as such. Your tackle can never be too strong; only avoid large hooks; those we

have recommended are sufficiently strong for your purpose. A bundle of slight twigs are not very easily broken; neither are two or three small hooks, stuck, at the same time, in a pike's gorge.

Mr. Jesse, from accounts that we have heard of him from gentlemen who have had the good fortune of making his acquaintance, so thoroughly understands trolling for pike, that we shall communicate his instructions to our readers. Mr. Jesse observes, "Indeed I have observed, that success in pike-fishing, especially in clear and shallow water, generally depends on the surface being ruffled. A fine bright day is often an unsuccessful one in pike-fishing; whereas, I have frequently had excellent sport in cold autumnal weather, when there has been a breeze on the water. When that breeze, however, is accompanied by a cloudy sky, and a warm southerly wind, a troller may depend on catching fish if there are any to be caught. The only thing I pique myself upon is, being a good troller; and I have, besides, one great advantage in trolling, and that is, having arms and legs of rather an unusual length, which enable me to cast a line further than most people. As some novices in the art may read this work, I will proceed to give them such instructions as will, if

properly attended to, speedily make them proficient in the art, and enable them,

‘To trowle for pike, dispeoplers of the lake.’

I must begin by recommending a light, but strong cane-rod, some ten or eleven feet in length,* rather stiff, but yet with some little pliability at the upper end. The rings should be of twisted brass, and each of them sufficiently large to allow, at least, the little finger to pass through them with ease. The use of these will be seen presently. The lines should be of about forty yards in length, so that an expert troller, in a good situation, and with the wind in his favour, should be able to cast nearly that distance at every throw.† The difficulty is, how to procure a good line. I recommend those sold by Mr. Barth of Cockspur-street,‡ and who also makes up the sets of trolling-hooks, which I am now about to describe. The hooks, eight in number, are fastened on gimp, having a loop at the end for the purpose of fastening it to the swivel of one end of a trace. The first hook is to be tied on at about half a foot from the loop, having the

* This rod is too short by one-half.

† The line should be varnished, and of the same quality as that recommended for fishing with the minnow, but it should be somewhat shorter.

‡ Those sold by Bowness and Co., Bell Yard, Temple Bar, are equally good.

barb pointing downwards, the second and third (double) hooks at an inch distance each from that, and a double hook is to be tied at the extreme end of the gimp, at about an inch and a half from the third hook. On the top or upper side of the gimp, is to be tied, at the distance of half an inch from the third hook, a single hook with the bend reversed towards the loop-end of the gimp. The first hook is to be put through the lips of the bait, passing it first, from the outside, through the upper and then through the lower lip; the second and third lower hooks should be fixed on the side of the back — the fourth, or reversed hook, is placed a contrary way, for the purpose of giving a bend to the tail of the bait which makes it spin — and one of the last hooks is to be fixed near the fork of the tail of the bait. It requires some skill to put on a bait properly, so as to make it spin when played in the water, but a little practice will soon effect this. The length from the loop to the last hook should be about eleven inches, and the trace about twenty-two inches, having a swivel at each end, and one in the middle. The trace is also made of gimp, and should have three or four rather large shots attached to it. These will enable a young beginner to throw his bait the more readily.

“ With the above-mentioned rod and tackle, half a dozen good dead baits, either gudgeons, or dace, but as nearly as possible — if a little longer the better — the length of the set of hooks to be used, a knife with a small hammer at the end, to kill and crimp the pike when taken, and a pair of scissors, to extract the hooks from his mouth, the troller may set to work. If he fishes from a bank, mill-dam, meadow, or, in short, from any place where his line is not liable to get entangled, no reel is necessary. It is, in fact, an encumbrance. Longer, quicker, and better casts can be made without one. The troller has only to gather up his line around him, and alter his cast, which is chiefly made with the right hand, and he has his left at liberty to draw in the line, which he disposes on the ground near him, stepping forward a pace or two, so as to vary the place where his bait is thrown. In this way he may make his casts with great rapidity, letting his bait sink or keeping it near the surface according to the depth of the water, or the height of the weeds. When weeds are found within six or eight inches of the surface, the bait should be skimmed nearly along the top of the water. This may be done by having a small one, fewer shot, keeping the top of the rod well elevated, and by throwing

out a lesser length of line. On the contrary, when the water is deep, the point of the rod should be held near the water, and additional shot should be added to the trace, to make the bait sink the quicker. In this way of trolling, the large rings recommended to be fixed on the rod are of essential use. In case of any knot in the line, or any bit of grass or small stick adhering to it, an obstruction seldom takes place, as the rings are sufficiently large to let them through, when the line is cast. This hint is well worth the attention of trollers. The best hooks for trolling are those made by O'Shaughnessy of Limerick. When a reel is necessary, as it is when fishing in foul places, I would recommend a wooden one, about four and a half inches across, having the rim grooved for the reception of the line. These reels turn round with great rapidity when the cast is made, letting out a sufficient length of line, and are wound up again by turning them with the fore-finger. They are much to be preferred to the common brass reel.

“When a pike has come at a bait, a moment's pause should take place, and he should be then gently struck to the right or left as his supposed position may be. If the troller strikes when the mouth of the fish is directly towards him, he is apt to pull the bait out of his

mouth. When a pike is hooked, he should be kept as much as possible near the surface of the water to prevent his getting into the weeds, which add so much to the stress on the line. If he is a weighty fish, it will be necessary to allow time for three or four violent struggles which he will make, but in general it is as well to land him as soon as possible. What is said about playing him till he is tired is a waste of time. I am always for securing a fish as quickly as may be. The best trolling I have had, has generally been from the 1st of November, to the 1st of March. The weeds are then down and rotten, and pike see the bait readily. The weather, however, for fishing at this season of the year, should be moderately fine, with a mild wind, and the water 'in tune,' as an old angler calls it. I have never had a good day's trolling when the water has been discoloured. The best time of the day for trolling for pike is, from four to six o'clock in the evening, in summer, and from two to three o'clock, in winter. They may, however, be readily taken at all times of the day when the weather is propitious. I prefer gudgeons to all other baits, as they are tougher, and, therefore, are not readily jerked off the hooks. If properly put on, they spin admirably, and are then very attractive. A bleak is the next good bait, but I generally

find that I take smaller pike with it than I do with a gudgeon. A small perch, with the fins cut off, is not a bad bait, but the most killing one I know of is, a smelt, it, however, is not always to be had. By fishing with a dead bait, and by instantly killing a fish as soon as it is landed, but little pain is inflicted, and perhaps not more than every animal suffers, in being deprived of life for the purpose of becoming food for the use of man. I am the more desirous of mentioning this, because there are many persons who think that angling and cruelty are synonymous terms. The method I recommend is, I think, infinitely to be preferred to the gorge, snap, or beed-hooks so generally used, and which have been extolled by both ancient and modern writers on angling. Experience alone can prove this."

A very excellent and amiable young friend of ours — endeared to us for his many manly attributes of head and heart — Mr. Charles Creswell, of New Lenton, Nottinghamshire, one of the most successful pike and perch fishers that we know, practises the following very simple method. For pike-fishing he makes use of a strong, short rod, with a strong silk line, and large wooden reel, and his bait is a live gudgeon. He merely passes a double pike-hook attached to about a yard of gimp

through both lips of the bait, allowing it to swim here and there at some distance from him, and rather near the bottom of the water. He uses a float in order to determine how far the bait is sunk. He allows the fish considerable time to gorge the gudgeon, and then he lands him with as little delay as possible. He perch fishes exactly in the same way, except that he uses a much smaller hook, tied on stout gut, and that his bait is a rather small-sized minnow. He generally wades, where the river will allow it, and fishes right on before him. Under his guidance we have frequently had excellent sport in divers parts of the river Trent, particularly at Beeston Weir, an excellent fishing station near Nottingham, and where before this summer be over, if health be spared us, we will once more join him and a party of right true friends, and if we cannot catch fish we can "spin tough yarns," Decameron-like, in some shady nook of Clifton Grove. And who knows but we may fall in with a shoal of——. We hate to excite jealousy; but we hope that Sir Jukes has not succeeded in shutting up the foot-path through the grove, and that old Nottingham pours out into its sylvan recesses its laughing gipsy-parties as of yore.*

* We have used in several of the rivers in the south of

Dibbing or Daping: — This is one of the easiest modes of angling, and we have seen children practise it with success. The flies used are natural ones in a live state, and the following are the best. The green-drake, the stone-fly, the common house or window fly, the oak-fly, and the March-brown. The green-drake is, *longo intervallo*, the best of all. The best time to fish with these flies is, two or three days after they come in, when the fish have become familiarised with their appearance, and are rising at them as fast as they drop upon the water. The pleasing advantage accompanying this way of fishing is, that it is practised at the most beautiful season of the year, when trout are in perfect condition, both as to colour and flavour,

Ireland an artificial fly in fishing for pike, and we have frequently killed large fish with it when every other lure proved useless. This fly should be dressed on a double hook formed of the same piece of wire, which should be fastened to a strong piece of gimp. The wings should be made of four feathers from a young peacock's tail. The part of the feather to be used, is that containing what is called the eye. The body of the fly should be made of an equal mixture of fine bear's fur, red squirrel's fur, and yellow mohair. The head should be made of half a dozen laps of gold-twist, and two small blue glass beads for eyes. Along the whole length of the body, which should be very full, broad gold tinsel should be rather thickly lapped. Windy and cloudy days are the most proper for the use of this fly. It should be cast as lightly as possible on the water, and kept in constant motion on or near the surface.

and when river scenery is to be viewed in its fullest perfection.

The rod to be used in dibbing must be about sixteen feet long, and its top joints must be stiffer than those of the fly-rod. Your fly reel and line will do, and to the end of it you must attach two yards of fine gut. When you use a single hook, it must be a No. 5 Kendal. The live flies are to be carried in a little wicker basket, made for the purpose at Ashborne and at other towns in the neighbourhood. The ends of the osier twigs are not to be cut off on the inside of the basket, but are to be allowed to protrude, in order that the flies may perch upon them, and be the more easily laid hold of. When you fish with a single fly, insert the hook through the back between the wings, bringing its point slightly out under one of them. When you bait with two flies, follow the directions of Cotton, viz., "First take one, and putting the point of the hook into the thickest part of his body, under one of his wings, run it directly through, and out at the other side; and then taking the other fly, put him on after the same manner, but with his head the contrary way; in which posture they will live upon the hook, and play with their wings, for a quarter of an hour or more; but you must have a care to keep their wings dry,

both from the water, and also that your fingers be not wet, when you take them out [of the basket] to bait them, for then your bait is spoiled." A very good plan, when you dib with two flies at a time, is to use a double No. 2 Kendal hook, passing one hook through the back between the wings of one fly, and doing the same to the second fly placed in a reversed position.

You must keep yourself as much out of sight of the fish as possible, and always begin dibbing near the bank on which you stand. Fish the river then across, allowing the wind to guide your line, and never allow an inch of it to touch the water. Whenever you see a fish rise, tempt him again by directing your fly so as to make it float over him. As soon as you feel or see a fish rise at you, strike as you do in artificial-fly fishing, and play him after the method directed for that sort of angling. Dibbing is best practised on pools, particularly when there is a light breeze.

When you fish in wide pools in rather windy weather, your reel-line should consist of a water-colour floss silk line. This, generally speaking, is by far the best line for dibbing. You must use a very long rod — one of twenty feet — and the rings on it must be large, and stand stiffly upright, in order that the floss-

line may meet with little or no obstruction in passing through them. By taking advantage of the wind, you may make your fly fall floatingly at a very great distance from you, indeed, with a little address, you may direct it whithersoever you please. The greatest care must be taken to preserve the floss-line from touching the water, or from imbibing any humidity. We never dabble with any other sort of line, and we invariably use but one hook, and but one fly at a time.

With respect to the stone-fly, Cotton's instructions are so correct, that we will limit ourselves to citing them. He says, "This stone-fly then we dape or dabble with, as with the drake, but with this difference, that, whereas the green-drake is common both to stream and still, and to all hours of the day; we seldom dape with this, but in the streams, (for in a whistling wind a made-fly, in the deep, is better) and rarely but early and late, it not being so proper for the mid-time of the day; though a great grayling will then take it very well in a sharp stream, and here and there a trout too; but much better toward eight, nine, ten, or eleven of the clock at night, at which time also the best fish rise, and the later the better, provided you can see your fly; and when you cannot, a made-fly

will murder.” We know of no better night-fly, when the sky is clear, than the stone-fly, particularly in streams.

The oak-fly is chiefly found in May and early in June, and not unfrequently in calm, hot days in July, with its head downwards (it is called the down-hill-fly) on the shady side of the trunks of oak trees, and other large trees growing near the river’s side. It is, in those months, a good fly to dabble with.

When dabling with the March-brown, two flies should be used as a bait at the same time. If abundance of those flies are on the river, trout and grayling will rise at them with great avidity, and if they refuse the artificial fly, which they seldom do when it is properly made, dabling with the natural fly will be certainly successful.

The house or window fly is a very killing fly to dab with, particularly towards the evening in the latter end of May and the beginning of June. It should be used at all times that the fish, gorged with the green-drake, at last through sheer surfeit refuse to take the latter fly.

It would repay any person, who has the slightest curiosity, for the trouble and expense of a long journey to come into Derbyshire during the drake-season. We have seldom

witnessed a prettier sight, than to see the banks of our streams crowded with persons of every age and sex, dibbing with the green-drake, while that beautiful insect is seen fluttering by myriads on or over the water, and about the trees, shrubs, and plants in the vicinity ; and the trout, now having recovered completely from the effects of spawning, are to be seen by hundreds with vigour and voracity darting at this lovely “being of a day.”

CHAPTER XII.

THE DOVE; ITS SCENERY: OTHER TROUT AND GRAYLING STREAMS IN ITS VICINITY. SKETCH OF ASHBORNE; ITS CHURCH. THE END.

“Well, go thy way, little Dove! thou art the finest river that ever I saw, and the fullest of fish.” *Cotton.*

IN writing about the Dove* we cannot refrain from touching on its scenery. We shall do so, however, very concisely; for we do not wish to trench too much upon the province of the professional tourist. Our business is with the piscatory, and not with the pictorial portions of the Dove. A slight combination of the latter with the former will be deemed, in this instance, we hope, perfectly pardonable. We will give first, before we come to our own de-

* Cotton says it is so called from the swiftness of its current. Sir Oswald Mosley, Bart. says, “The Dove was so called, from the British word “dwfr,” (water); and the Derwent, from the British “dwr,” (water), and “gwin,” (white).

scription of certain parts of this famous stream — and our description shall be confined to the best fishing portions, with their immediate scenery — a pretty correct statistical account of it taken *verbatim* from Glover: — “The Dove takes its rise among cavities of gritstone and coal-shade, near Thatch-marsh colliery, between the great and middle Axe-edge hills. The scenery around the sources of this beautiful river, presents tracts of barren mountainous ridges, covered with heath, from which the traveller has extensive views, on one hand, over the fruitful and thickly-peopled plains of Staffordshire and Cheshire; and, on the other, the dreary and sometimes stupendous elevations of the Peak. After cutting through the gritstone rock, this small but rapid branch is joined by another stream, which passes by a village called Dove-head, and has been selected by Walton,* the angler, and by Edwards, the poet of the Dove, as the original stream.

* It is very odd that people will be confounding Walton with Cotton. Walton was a mere bottom-fisher, and knew nothing about fly-fishing. The few directions he gives upon the art, are borrowed from Mr. Thomas Barker, an old writer and a cotemporary. Walton knew little or nothing of the Dove; it was to Cotton that Glover should have referred. The second part of “The Complete Angler,” which treats of fly-fishing, and of the rivers of Derbyshire and Staffordshire, was entirely written by Cotton. Walton had no more to do with it than ourselves.

‘ At length ’tis gain’d, the heathy cloud-capt mountain !
 Not at the hamlet of Dove-head I rest,
 But, higher up, beside a bubbling fountain,
 That makes within a little well its nest.

Here springs the Dove ! and with a grateful zest
 I drink its waters, that first serve the poor.

O ! when shall they repose on Ocean’s breast ?

How long must their rough pilgrimage endure ?

They ask not, but commence their wild romantic tour.’

Edwards.

“ The course of this extraordinary stream passes thrice over what the geologists, who have investigated the strata of this county, term the great limestone fault, and, consequently, intersects rocks of the earliest formation. Through a valley, called Beresford-dale, which is scarcely half a mile in extent, its course is upon the fourth limestone ; but in the valley, particularly denominated Dove-dale, it rushes amid precipitous rocks, and opens to the inquisitive eye of the scientific student, more of the general series of strata than is any where else to be contemplated in the same limited extent throughout England. After passing between the two surprising hills of limestone, Thorpe-cloud and Bunster, the bed of the river is formed of the *débris* of the neighbouring rocks, consisting of quartz-gravel, thin limestone, and other alluvial matter ; while, as its waters proceed towards Ashborne,

they gradually enter the red marl, but not without bringing with them gritstone sand, and limestone pebbles, which are in some places along their course thickly and extensively deposited. Even where the Dove empties itself into the Trent, at Newton-Solney Ford, the red marl is covered with deposits of quartz-sand and gravel, which the stream has carried onward from the abrupt and mountainous tracts through which it has passed.

“The picturesque beauty of the banks of the Dove has been the repeated theme of travellers, whether painters or poets. Mr. Rhodes, to whose elegant work we [to wit, Mr. Glover] are already indebted for descriptive extracts of the richest character, says, ‘The river Dove is one of the most beautiful streams that ever gave a charm to landscape; and while passing along the first, and least picturesque divisions of the dale,* the ear was soothed with its murmurings, and the eye delighted with the brilliancy of its waters: in some places it flows smoothly and solemnly along, but never slowly; in others, its motion is rapid, impetuous, and even turbulent. The

* Mr. Rhodes, the reader is requested to observe, is merely speaking of the Dove, as seen in its meandering through Dove-dale. This gentleman’s pencil, in the present instance, is painting with colours rather too warm.

ash, the hazel, the slender osier, and the graceful birch, hung with honey-suckles and wild-roses, dip their pensile branches in the stream, and break its surface into beauteous ripples. Huge fragments of stone, toppled from the rocks above, and partly covered with moss and plants that haunt and love the water, divide the stream into many currents; round these it bubbles in limpid rills, that circle into innumerable eddies, which, by their activity, give life and motion to a numerous variety of aquatic plants that grow in the bed of the river; these wave their slender stems under the surface of the water, which, flowing over them, like the transparent varnish of a picture, brings forth the most vivid colouring. Occasionally, large stones are thrown across the stream, and interrupt its progress; over and among these it rushes rapidly into the pool below, forming, in its frequent falls, a series of fairy cascades, about which it foams and sparkles with a beauty and brilliancy peculiar to this lively and romantic river.' — The waters of this river have a clear blue tint, deepening through various shades to a dark purple. The limestone over which they flow, renders them fertile, and when they overflow their banks in the spring, they enrich the

adjacent meadows. This has given occasion to this proverb :

‘ In April, Dove’s flood
Is worth a king’s good !’

“ These floods are, however, sometimes so sudden, that the waters have been known to rise and fall again in the course of a day, carrying down their channel flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. Such inundations are caused by what are termed ‘shots of water,’ which the Dove often receives in its course through the mountains. Cotton, whose verses seldom rise to any very elevated strain of sentiment, has, in his quaint poem on the Wonders of the Peak, the following lines on the Dove, which constitute its most beautiful passage :*

————— ‘ Thy murmurs, Dove,
Pleasing to lovers, or men fall’n in love,
With thy bright beauties, and thy fair blue eyes,
Wound like a Parthian, while the shooter flies.
Of all fair Thetis’ daughters none so bright,
So pleasant to the taste — none to the sight —
None yields the gentle angler such delight : —
To which the bounty of her stream is such,
As only with a swift and transient touch,
T’ enrich her barren borders as she glides,
And force sweet flowers from their marble sides.’ ”

* This criticism is Mr. Glover’s — not ours. See Glover’s 8vo. edition, vol. 1, part 1, page 36.

We begin our sketch of the Dove at the spot called Dove-head, and, following the opinion of Cotton, we will assume that the stream begins there. Dove-head is about ten miles to the north of Beresford-hall, and the rivulet at the former spot is not more than a yard wide. From Dove-head to Glutton-bridge there is no angling; but at the latter place, where the stream is not more than between two and three yards wide, a few trout may be taken with the fly in the beginning of the season. This bridge is about four miles from Dove-head, and the stream widening in its course, there is tolerable angling, in the spring, when the water is full, to Ludwell, which is about three miles from Glutton-bridge. From Ludwell to Hartington fishing becomes better, and the angler in the early part of the year will be as successful in the streams about this spot as in any other part of Dove-dale. Accommodation and refreshment can be obtained at Hartington, things very scarce in the northern parts of the Dale. From Hartington to Beresford-hall is a mile. Beresford-hall, once the residence of the famous Cotton, is situated on the Staffordshire side of the stream, and is now a farm-house inhabited by Mrs. Hannah Gibbs. It is in good repair, and we were told, that its interior

arrangement, with the exception of one room, is the same as in the time of Cotton. There are some handsome plantations laid out around it. Cotton's fishing-house was repaired about three years ago, and is now nearly in the same state as when the original constructor of it described it. All those repairs and improvements are owing to the good taste of the actual owner, the Marquis of Beresford. Beresford-hall is about three miles and a half from Mill-dale, and there is very good fishing in the different parts of the river between those two places. The scenery of the portion of the river just described, that is, from Dove-head to Mill-dale, is somewhat monotonous. It is wild, bleak, and betokens barrenness, and the river, in its course, during this distance, flows between steep hills, that have scarcely a tree or plant to break the cheerless sameness of their surface. At Mill-dale, on the Staffordshire side, are a few miserable houses, forming a sort of village, or hamlet, on the margin of the river, close under perpendicular cliffs of great height, and as wildly situated as the greatest lover of the extreme picturesque could desire. Few mere visitors penetrate the Dale so far north as this collection of huts, but anglers ought; and if they inquire for an old and unfortunate brother of the angle, called

Sampson Hastings, they will find him located in a sort of shed, built in the ruins of his mountain cot, which was burnt down a short time since. It will be a real charity to employ this poor veteran as a guide, and, candidly speaking, we know no man who has a more exact knowledge of the Dove in its passage through the Dale.

From Mill-dale to a large isolated rocky column — called Ilam Stone — the scenery is the same as hitherto described. The stream now grows wider, and varies from twelve to twenty yards in its further progress through the Dale. From Ilam Stone to Reynard's Hall, and to the rocks called Dove-dale Church, the scenery is extremely imposing. On this subject we will quote an excellent description by the Rev. D. P. Davies:—"Reynard's Hall is a natural cave of forty-five feet in length, fifteen in breadth, and thirty in height. From the mouth of this cavern, the scene is singular, beautiful, and impressive. The face of the rock which contains the arch, rises immediately in front, and would effectually prevent the eye from ranging beyond its mighty barrier, did not its centre open into the above-mentioned arch, through which is seen a small part of the opposite side of the Dale, a mass of gloomy wood, from whose shade a huge detached rock, soli-

tary, craggy, and pointed, starts out to a great height, and forms an object truly sublime. This rock is known by the appellation of Dove-dale Church, and is pleasingly contrasted by the little pastoral river, and its verdant turfy bank below. The approach to these natural excavations — Reynard's Hole and Hall — is very difficult of access even on foot, but impracticable on horse-back : the latter [mode of ascending], however, was unfortunately tried about seventy years ago. The Rev. Mr. Langton, Dean of Clogher, in Ireland, proposed to ascend on horse-back a very steep precipice, near Reynard's Hole, apparently between three and four hundred feet high ; and Miss La Roche, a young lady of the dean's party, agreed to accompany him on the same horse. When they had climbed the rock to a considerable height, the poor animal, unable to sustain the fatigue of the task imposed upon him, fell under his burden and rolled down the steep. The dean was precipitated to the bottom, where he was taken up so bruised and mangled by the fall, that he expired in a few days after, and was buried in Ashborne church : but the young lady, whose descent had been retarded by her hair entangling in a bramble bush, slowly recovered ; though when disengaged, she was insensible, and continued so for two days. The horse,

more fortunate than its riders, was but very slightly injured." The fishing in the neighbourhood of Reynard's Hall is excellent. Nearly opposite its base, runs two very capital streams, the upper one called Great Sharplow, and the lower one named Little Sharplow. From this spot there is a constant succession of beautiful streams, running through the most picturesque portion of the Dale, until you come to a part of the river denominated Sedgy Pool, from the quantity of sedges it produces. The fishing in this pool is good, and at the bottom of it is a weir, forming an excellent stream. This stream is nearly at the entrance of the Dale as you approach it from Ashborne, *via* the little village of Thorpe.* There are

* "A little to the north of the village, is Thorpe Cloud, a conical hill, of very steep ascent, which rises to a great height. Near this is a tolerably good descent, into a deep hollow called Bunster-dale; one side of which is bounded by a steep acclivity, covered with wood; and the other by a range of lofty crags, of wild, uncouth appearance. Passing through the narrow ravine (where the eye is prevented from excursion, and the mind thrown back upon itself) for half a mile, a sudden turn presents the eye with the southern entrance of the far-famed and romantic Dove-dale, a name it has received from the river Dove, which pours its waters through the valley. On entering Dove-dale, it is impossible not to be struck with the almost instantaneous change of scenery, so different from the surrounding country. Here, instead of the brown heath, or the rich cultivated meadow, rocks abrupt and vast, their grey sides harmonised by mosses, lichens, and yew trees, their tops sprinkled with mountain-ash, rise on each side. The

several good streams winding nearly round the celebrated conical elevation called Thorpe Cloud, and from it, through several fields, called Thorpe Pingles,* for a distance of about half a mile, flow in a southern direction several excellent streams. The Dove then runs for nearly the same distance through banks which are so

mountains that inclose this narrow dell rise very precipitous, and bear on their sides fragments of rock, that, at a distance, look like the remains of some ruined castle. After proceeding a little way, a deep and narrow valley presents itself, into whose recesses the eye is prevented from penetrating, by the winding course it pursues, and the shutting in of its precipices, which fold into each other, and preclude all distant view. On proceeding, the scenery of Dove-dale gradually increases in majesty and rudeness." *Davies.*

The Dove used to be formerly preserved in the Dale, as far as it ran through the property of Mr. Jesse Watts Russell and Sir Henry Fitz-Herbert, Bart., and then there was excellent fishing in it. Every one may lash it now, and the consequence is, that fishing in it is not half so good as in the Dove after it joins the Manifold. Indeed, the only season in which we can conscientiously advise our readers to angle in Dove-dale is the spring, and the earlier in that quarter of the year the better. Having mentioned the name of Sir Henry Fitz-Herbert, although in so obscure a part of the work as in a note, we cannot help telling our readers, that to no person in the list of our subscribers are we so much indebted as to that gentleman. His exertions, and that of his family in our favour, have been so warm, that we are almost tempted to call them friendly. If ever this work comes to a second edition, we will try to show part of our gratitude to the illustrious family of the Fitz-Herberts.

* In the vicinity is a very convenient inn, called the Izaak Walton, kept by a very obliging landlord of the appropriate name of Waterfall.

thickly covered with alders and other trees, as to render it very difficult to be fly-fished, after which it joins the Manifold, a stream that has its second rise in the neighbourhood of Ilam-hall.* The Dove now becomes a much wider and deeper stream, and a little below its junction with the Manifold, is a fine sheet of water called Flaxly Pool, noted for its large trout and grayling. Between this pool and Coldwall-bridge, is a gentle stream of considerable length, and one of the best in the unpreserved portions of the river. From the bridge thus named, there is a succession of excellent streams, until you come to a fine sheet of water called Peg's Hole. From this sheet of water, until you come to a part of the river called Thorpe Ruff or Thorpe Budds, there are several excellent streams, but which are not easily fly-fished, on account of the many trees growing on their banks. The river now presents — running south-east — a good succession of pool and stream, until you arrive at Oakover-bridge. From half a mile or thereabouts below this bridge, every one has liberty to fish, and the streams are excellent ones as far as Hanging-bridge. On the north side of this bridge is a fine sheet of water called Garden-wheel, a noted place for dibbing with the green-drake and

* Vide cut at the end of the 10th. chapter.

other natural flies. Hanging-bridge is not a bad fishing-station, and excellent accommodation may be had at the King's Arms, a very clean public-house, kept by a person of the name of Sandys. The scenery from Coldwall-bridge to Hanging-bridge, is remarkably beautiful, particularly on the Staffordshire side of the Dove. It is not like the scenery of Dove-dale, such as Salvator Rosa would choose to paint, but our friend Linton would find many parts of it suitable to his fine English taste.

To the south of Hanging-bridge, opposite to a large cotton factory, belonging to John Douglas Cooper, Esq. a gentleman of the most punctilious probity, and curious in all that relates to the natural history of the fish of the Dove, and the insects they feed upon, are a fine stream and pool; and a little lower down, is a beautiful sheet of water, called Barnet's Dam, frequented by the lovers of dibbing and bottom-fishing. The angler next arrives at May-field Weir, at which there is good fishing all along to a noted spot, called Lunch. The next good spot is, the pool that flows to Sides-mill Weir. From this weir to Calwich Liberty, the fishing is very good. The Derbyshire side of the water belongs to a very extensive landed proprietor, John Harrison, Esq. a gentleman of great influence

and excellent character, and owner of the beautiful mansion, not far from the river, called Snelston-hall. The Staffordshire side, as far as Calwich Weir, belongs to William Greaves, Esq. M. D. of May-field-hall, whose professional exertions are ever put forward in behalf of the poor with disinterested zeal and humanity. From Calwich Weir to Ellaston Bridge, there is no better fishing on any part of the river, which is chiefly to be attributed to Salt, the indefatigable and courageous keeper of Court Granville, Esq. Calwich Abbey, the seat of this gentleman—who is of most ancient descent, and of most blameless reputation, and whose noble character has been rewarded with one of the finest and most numerous families of sons and daughters in England—is romantically situated nearly opposite the pretty church of Norbury, on the Staffordshire side of the Dove. To this family we acknowledge ourselves indebted for innumerable favours, conferred in the handsomest manner. Norbury Pool and Weir, and the streams succeeding, as far as Ellaston bridge, are full of trout and grayling. To the south of the bridge, there is good fishing as far as Rocester, particularly at a beautiful spot, called Dove Leys, on the Staffordshire side, belonging to Benjamin

Heywood, the celebrated banker of Manchester. From Rocester, all along to Uttoxeter, there is good fishing; but beyond the latter town, we are not sufficiently acquainted with the localities of the river, to justify us in praising any particular parts of it. The fishing from Uttoxeter to the Trent is not, we understand, of a decidedly good character.

The Derwent is a river of great celebrity in Derbyshire. It rises in the Peak, and flows by Hathersage, Chatsworth, Rowsley, below the bridge of which village it receives the Wye. It then flows through Matlock, Cromford, Belper, Derby, and joins the Trent near the village of Wilne. The fishing in it is good in the neighbourhood of Rowsley and Matlock, and for seven miles below Matlock-bridge. The flies that are taken in the Dove will kill in the Derwent.

The Wye, an excellent trout stream, rises among the Axe-edge hills, flows by Buxton and Bakewell, and empties itself into the Derwent below Rowsley-bridge. The fishing in it is of the very first order, particularly from Bakewell to Rowsley, and its course, between those two places, is amid scenery of the most lovely character. In this respect, it will be enough to mention, that it flows almost at the base of the well-known Haddon-hall.

The river is strictly preserved from poachers, by the orders of his Grace the Duke of Rutland; but any gentleman that stops at the Rutland Arms can obtain permission to angle in it, through the medium of Mr. W. Greaves, the landlord.

We take this opportunity of mentioning the pretty town of Bakewell, as one of the best fishing-stations in England, and of recommending the Rutland Arms, in this town, as an inn second to none in any country town of the midland counties. Mr. Greaves, the landlord, whose polite and unceasing attention to his guests is proverbial, is ever ready to give those who are "brothers of the angle" every facility and every information the most enthusiastic of them may require in the pursuit of their favourite amusement. He can give them the best information relative to the many excellent trout and grayling streams in his neighbourhood.

The Lathkil, famous for the colour and the quantity of its trout, rises among the hills near Monyash, and joins the Bradford at the foot of the 'Tor. No one, but the immediate relatives and friends of his Grace the Duke of Rutland, is allowed to fish in this celebrated little stream. It is better adapted for minnow-fishing than fly-fishing, and, notwith-

standing the high-pink colour of its trout, their flavour is not good.

The Churnet is a good stream for trout, and many persons think highly of the quality of its grayling. There are too many coarse fish in it, to allow it to be a stream to our liking. It flows by the town of Leek, but on account of the effect of the silk-dying mills, in that town and its neighbourhood, on the water, there is no fishing till the angler arrives at Oakmoor Wire-mills. From these mills to where the Churnet empties itself into the Dove, between Rocester and Crake Marsh, there is very tolerable fishing. The flies to be used are to be the same as those that suit the Dove, but they must be much larger, and dressed on a No. 4 Kendal hook.

The Blythe abounds in trout and grayling. It rises in the neighbourhood of Watley-moor, and falls into the Trent near King's Bromley. Its scenery is worthy of notice in the vicinity of Blithfield, the seat of Lord Bagot, but nowhere else. The same flies that are taken in the Churnet will kill in the Blythe. It is a capital river for spinning the minnow.

There are several brooks in the neighbourhood of Ashborne famous for their trout. The following are the principal ones.

Bradbourn-brook has excellent trout, and the

best fishing in it is, from Bradbourn-mill to Wood-eaves cotton-mill. The same flies that are taken in the Dove will kill in it, but the surest bait is the minnow.

Cubley-brook rises near the village of the same name, and there is good trout-fishing in it from Cubley-mill to where it runs into Boylstone-brook. It is very narrow and woody, and cannot be easily fly-fished. The flies must be showy ones, dressed on a No. 4 Kendal hook. The minnow-fishing in it is excellent.

Boylstone-brook may be fished with fair success, as far as Foston-dam, with the minnow. It is too narrow and too woody to be fished with the artificial fly.

Foston-brook can be fished with the minnow from the before-mentioned dam to near Sudbury, where it runs into the Dove.

Brailsford-brook may be fished with good success, from the mill to where it runs into Longford-brook. Its trout are of excellent quality, and must be fished for with the minnow.

Longford-brook, as it flows from the mill of the same name, becomes wide enough for fly-fishing, and it may be successfully fished with the fly or minnow, for about the distance of a mile and a half, until it runs into Barton-

brook. The trout of Longford-brook are nearly as highly coloured as salmon, and, for flavour, are not surpassed by those of any stream in England.

Barton-brook has the same general characteristics as the former ones just described, but, being better preserved, there is, of course, more fish in it. It may be fished with success as far as Sutton-dam. Use gaudy flies, of a large size. Fishing with the minnow is excellent, and the trout of this brook are as good as those of the last-mentioned brook.

Our fishing lectures are now done and over, and we really hope that they will prove a source of amusement to each and all of our readers. Of one thing we are positively sure, and that is, that if they are read with care, and their precepts remembered, they will make every one, that does so, thoroughly versed in the theory of fly-fishing. Let that theory be but slightly put into practice, and we answer for the sure and rapid progress of our pupils. If any of them should wish for more practical information, we are most ready to afford it, and we beg to offer them the most cordial invitation to ———.

ASHBORNE: — Before we point out the convenient locality as a fishing-station of this charming little town, we shall give a brief de-

scription of it. It is situated about one hundred and forty miles (N. W. by N.) from London. Its distance from Derby is thirteen and a half miles, (N. W. by W.); from Matlock, twelve miles, (S. W.); from Leek, sixteen miles, (S. E.); and from Bakewell, eighteen miles, (S. W). The town being situated in a deep valley, and surrounded nearly on all sides by hills, is not visible until you arrive almost upon it. The spire of its handsome church is, generally speaking, that which first indicates to you your approach to a town. We like such an indication — it is, as it were, religion directing you to the congregated habitations of man. We will suppose the traveller coming from London *via* Derby. The first glimpse he catches of Ashborne is from the top of the “new road,” which leads by a rapid descent into the southern part of the town, called Compton. As soon as he arrives on the summit alluded to, he sees, rather to the right, Ashborne-hall,* the handsome country residence of Sir Wm. Boothby Bart. Before him he sees, stretching right and left, the town. On the extreme left he catches a view — a one-sided one — of the church. In the back-ground to the north is a range of hills, studded with houses almost to their summits.

* Vide vignette at the end of the 7th. chapter.

In the far distance of that northern back-ground, he will perceive the hill called "Thorpe Cloud," and the peaks of other hills, which inform him, that between their irregular bases is situated the renowned Dove-dale. A pretty little brook, now called Compton-brook, and formerly named the Schoo or Henmore, and in times gone by, celebrated for the excellent quality of its trout,* runs irregularly on the south of the town. When the traveller has crossed the bridge over this brook, and arrived at the northern end of Dig-street, he finds himself in that part of the town from which he can best judge of its interior locality.

He will then see, on his left, in a line, Church-street, decidedly the best street in the town, and, on account of the many large and well-built mansions in it, it would really be a fine street, were it not that its beauty is blemished by the irregularity of the buildings, some of which are little better than mere hovels. At the left-end of this street is situated the church; and almost the last building, on the right-side of the street at the same end, is

* "*Viator* :— But what pretty river is this, that runs under this stone bridge? — has it a name?

"*Piscator* :— Yes, it is called Henmore; and has in it both trout and grayling." *Cotton*.

The poachers have long since taken them out. They may return when the poachers are taken out of Ashborne—but not before.

the free grammar-school, founded in the reign of Elizabeth, and a handsome specimen of the architecture of that age. It is now under the able superintendence of the Rev. G. E. Gepp. Supposing the traveller still in the same place, he sees extending directly on his right, John Street, which is terminated by the wall of Ashborne-hall. A short way up John Street, on the left, is the market-place; from the top of which, the stranger, after having taken the survey just pointed out, may form to himself a pretty accurate notion of the whole of the town. However, to use the words of Mr. Brayley, "Though Ashborne is agreeably situated to the eye, it being in a fertile vale, with the hills rising rather bold, yet the objects are too much scattered for a picture;" and we will add, for a clear and intelligible typographical description.

Some of the most remarkable historical events that occurred in Ashborne, are the following: — A battle took place in the neighbourhood of the town between the royalists and the parliamentarians in February, 1644; in which the former were worsted, with considerable loss. Charles I. remained at Ashborne during the battle. In the month of August of the year following, in his march through the Peak to Doncaster, he stopped to hear divine service performed in the church. One hun-

dred years later (1745) Charles Edward, attended by the dukes of Athol and Perth, on their march to and from Derby, halted at Ashborne. The prince and his officers took forcible possession of Ashborne-hall, expelling Sir Brooke Boothby and his family. Some of the officers wrote their names on the doors of the different rooms in which they slept, and the inscriptions were legible until they were defaced by the late Sir Brooke Boothby. The bed in which young Stuart slept is in the possession of the author.

As a fishing-station — we mean, of course, fly-fishing — Ashborne is unrivalled. It is situated within less than a mile of some of the best parts of the Dove, and within three or four miles of the very best. Behind it, on the north, at the distance of a few hundred yards, runs Bentley-brook, in which, at the beginning of the season, pretty good fishing may be had. If it were preserved from the depredations of the gentlemen of the net and night-line, it would be a beautiful little trout stream. If not worth fishing in, it is worth looking at. Bradbourn, Cubley, Boylstone, Foston, Barton, Brailsford, and Longford brooks, all abounding in excellent trout, are about from four to eight miles distant. It is within a morning's walk of the Wye, the Derwent, the

Churnet, the Blythe, the Manifold, and the celebrated Lathkil, whose excellence, either as trout or grayling streams, has been more particularly noticed in a preceding part of the chapter. Situated as Ashborne is, almost on the banks of the Dove, and surrounded by several other streams, some of them of nearly equal celebrity, it is not surprising if its inhabitants are extremely partial to fly-fishing and trolling. They are; and no town in England can produce, taking its size into the calculation, so many perfect proficientes in those two modes of angling. The stranger, therefore, who comes, for the first time, to angle in the streams of Derbyshire and Staffordshire, can obtain every information at Ashborne, relative to the object of his visit. He need but put up at the Green-man or at the Wheat-sheaf—the two best hotels in the town—and the proprietors will inform him where he may obtain, most correctly and faithfully, the requisite information. We do not mention the superiority of those hotels for the purpose of bribing their proprietors: they are above it. However, we think we know to whom they will direct their angling guests, who either seek for local information as to fly-fishing, or for rods, tackle, or flies. It may be to ourselves, or it may not—but we think the

party does not live one hundred miles from either hotel. Moreover, the stranger will find, at the close of the day, when his angling amusements are for the time terminated, a social and friendly reception, if he choose to repair to any of the public rooms frequented by a mixed company. One of the writers of this book is a stranger, temporarily, he fears, sojourning in the town of Ashborne, and, speaking from experience, he assures all strangers of social hearts and dispositions, that they will find kindred spirits there, and that it will be with a strong feeling of regret that they will sigh farewell to Ashborne.

Long, long before we came to Ashborne, we heard of the beauty of its church, and though our imaginations are pretty warm, and apt to be too highly excited by previous description, we were not disappointed when we first beheld it. If we were, it was agreeably so. The beauty of this church is, that there is nothing extravagant — nothing running to extremes — in its architecture. We have seen churches more striking in their appearance, either from over-wrought and over-mixed decoration, or, strange as it may appear, from their extreme, their naked simplicity; but we do not recollect having seen a church more likely to please the man of chastened taste. It is very difficult

to decide from what point it can be seen to the greatest advantage. Such is the happiness of its situation, that on all sides it presents a beautiful object. We think, however, that it looks best from certain parts of the Sudbury road; but that notion has been frequently shaken when we have seen it in the distance, on a summer's evening, when returning from a fishing excursion to Norbury or to Calwich. Generally speaking, the different western points are the most favourable to view it from. It is, considering the smallness of the town, a spacious edifice. Its body is cruciform. It has a square central tower, surmounted by a light, lofty, and elegantly-ornamented octagonal spire, pierced with twenty windows. The style of its architecture, is the early English, but extremely modified by an intermixture of alterations and decorations of a later date. The piers and arches of the nave are fine, and bear the characteristics of the early English style. The same may be said of the chancel, which has a high window on the east, and two stone-stalls. The windows of the north transept are decorated; there is but one window, perpendicular and of large dimensions, in the south transept. The door-ways, which are numerous, are of the early English style, and are in good repair. In truth, the whole exterior

of the church bears the stamp of extraordinary freshness — the walks of the church-yard, the different gates opening into it, have the same renovated appearance ; and we have been assured, that all this is to be attributed chiefly to the exertions of the person, who has for several successive years filled with laudable zeal the office of what is termed “the vicar’s churchwarden.” The name of the gentleman alluded to is Lister, who, now that he has accumulated by his own industry an ample fortune, and raised himself to the enviable post of being one of the most wealthy and respectable tradesmen in the town, shows his gratitude to God by devoting much time and much labour to beautifying and strengthening that God’s house of prayer. We hope, that in a future edition we shall have to record, that the interior of the church has undergone a new arrangement under the directions of that clever architect Mr. Cottingham. We know that Mr. Lister for one is endeavouring to bring about so desirable a consummation.

In the sepulchral chapel, belonging to the Boothby family, situated on the northern side of the chancel, is a monumental statue of very wide celebrity. Rhodes’s description of it being brief, we shall quote that author : — “It is in memory of Miss Boothby (a lovely little

girl, who died at the age of five, daughter of Sir Brooke Boothby), from the chisel of T. Banks, R. A. which, for execution and design, would do credit to the talents of any artist. On a marble pedestal, a mattress, sculptured from the same material, is laid; on this the child reposes, but apparently not in quiet; her head reclines on a pillow, but the disposition of the whole figure indicates restlessness. The little sufferer, indeed, appears as if she had just changed her position, by one of those frequent turnings to which illness often in vain resorts for relief from pain." There are four inscriptions on the tablet of this exquisite monument — all bearing testimony to the feelings and learning of the afflicted parent — in English, Latin, Italian, and French. We prefer the English and French ones, particularly on account of the melancholy ideas expressed in the latter portions of them.

It shows, perhaps, wrong taste in us to touch upon such grave matters in a fishing-book. But let the reader reflect, that we are just at the end of our work — that such a position naturally suggests to the mind, that some day will arrive — it may be near or it may be remote — when there will be a final end to all our earthly labours — let him suppose us, as we really are, writing by the twilight of a dark,

cold, and sleety day of April — and he will not be surprised that serious subjects and solemn thoughts should be congenial to our mind. What is more, though we have just concluded the composition of a book on a recreative art, let not the reader deem it strange or unkind, both as it regards him and ourselves, that our parting wish should be, that his and our bones may never find a less hallowed place of repose, than in some quiet and concealed corner of the consecrated ground on which is founded this beautiful



THE END.

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